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THE CRESSET

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THE CRESSET

Cover

Joseph Cornell (1902-1972), *Untitled* (*Birds, Nest with Eggs, and Madonnas*). Mid-1960s Collage, 11½ x 8½". Valparaiso University Art Collections.

Inside Cover

Joseph Cornell (1902-1972), *Untitled* (*Wine Glass*), Mid-1960s Collage, 11½ x 8½". Valparaiso University Art Collections. 1980 Gift of Betty C. Benton.

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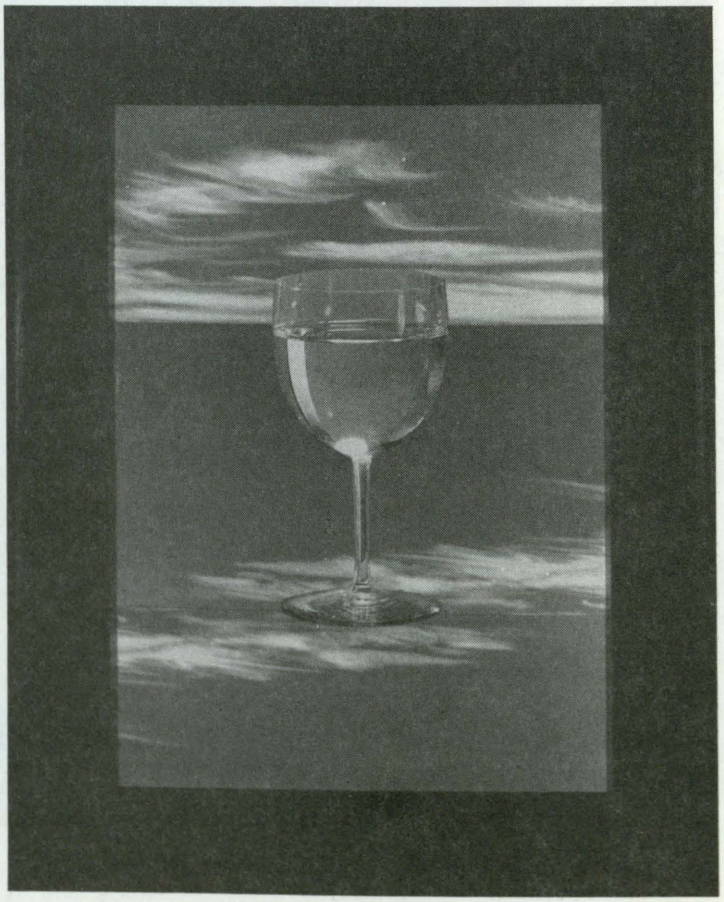


To See Or Not To See

When the Cresset *editor is not editing, he is either teaching freshman rhetoric, or directing student plays, or teaching art appreciation, or teaching film. Juggling his teaching duties and his editing duties often induces a certain mild schizophrenia, especially when he tilts back and forth between editing the print medium and teaching the film medium.*

This month's In Luce Tua *alumni column, therefore, strikes an especially responsive chord in me. While the particular problem well discussed there is not my own problem—my approach to film is anthropological, not literary—the columnist and I do have a problem in common with many film teachers in higher education today.*

That problem, simply stated, is where to locate film study in the conventional departmental structure of the modern university. If we are wise enough not to bury film study in a separate department of its own, where is its most appropriate home? In Art? In Communications? In History? In Humanities? In Languages and Literature? In Theatre? Film study has made its bed in all those departments, and there are more departments where film study could appropriately be lodged. Many different disciplines can illuminate film, and the film can provide fresh evidence for many different subject matters.

My own preference, therefore, is for interdisciplinary undergraduate film study programs taught by faculty stretching themselves and their disciplines. In principle, every teacher has a stake in the visual literacy of today's students.

And most college students today are not nearly as visually literate as their print literate professors often assume them to be. While some students can see a film, only a few can see through *a film. In an age of images of all kinds in many visual media, we need to draw the widest curricular ring around film study, bring many disciplines to bear upon it, and move as many students as possible from the eye level to the brow level of visual literacy.*

Leading us into some problems in teaching visual literacy is our February alumni columnist, Ronald D. Scheer. He was graduated from the University in 1964 and took his Ph.D. in English from UCLA. Presently he teaches English and film at Mansfield State College in Mansfield, Pennsylvania.

Dr. Scheer publishes in the areas of philology, literary biography, and film, and his videotape "Letter to a Friend in California" was recently screened at the Conference on Visual Anthropology. He and his actress wife, Lynda Thomas (VU 1964), have two children, Anne and Jeremy.

The Cresset *welcomes alumnus Scheer to* In Luce Tua.

The Editor

IN LUCE TUA

Pass the Popcorn

Some Thoughts on Visual Literacy

Ronald D. Scheer

Ask any English teacher. Reading literature is dead. Maybe reading itself has died. Students are more alienated than ever from the pleasures of the text.

"Aw, ma," I overheard a teenager moan recently in Waldenbooks, "I don't like that stuff."

Her mother was in the Signet Classics, trying to tempt her offspring with *Oliver Twist* and *The Yearling.* "Something for your mind," mother kept saying.

"I get enough of that in school," the daughter groaned. She had found, instead, a paperback called *Five Minute Mysteries.*

"That's just junk," her mother countered, and the dispute dragged on. "Look!" she finally said, "*Gone With the Wind!* You'd love that!"

But the spark of enthusiasm didn't take. "Aw, ma," the girl said. "It's four thousand pages long. And anyway, I saw the movie."

The mother was still losing ground as I headed for the cashier at the front—a long walk, as "Literature" is at the absolute back of Waldenbooks, where few customers venture. Even I had got only as far as the science fiction section.

By chance, I had been shopping for my own teenage daughter, picking out a copy of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451,* a horror story for any book lover, about a future where reading is a crime. Ruminating on this whole incident a couple weeks later, I am making more of it than is probably fair. But what I see is this: although more books are published now than ever, we seem headed anyway for some version of Bradbury's world, where humane sensibilities are dimmed because the body of literature that helps to sustain them is no longer read.

I feel partly to blame for all this. In the Sixties and early Seventies, I supported the cultural revolution that then swept American campuses. *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* was my bible, and liberating the young from the dead grip of the past was among my chief objectives as a new college teacher, fresh from graduate school. Relevance mattered. Self-directed learning.

Although most movies are still simple enough to make sense of, as a subject of college and university study they have become nearly incomprehensible.

Getting in touch with feelings. Being here. Now. (Ten years later, the rock group Supertramp summed it all up in one of 1979's biggest hits, "The Logical Song," a hymn to the adolescent distaste for rationality.)

Now, marooned on a sliver of time no bigger than a computer chip, we are left with a present that looks and feels just as dead as the past once did. What went wrong? We had good intentions, but maybe too much faith in the young. Given the freedom to grow in their own ways, they seem hardly to grow at all.

I confess to something else. I am an English teacher who set aside his training in literature in order to teach film. "I'm vaguely curious," a friend who is a retired schoolmaster writes me from Scotland. "How exactly do you *teach* film? I was brought up on the gospel that my pupils should go less often to the pictures and spend more time on their homework."

On Film as Distinct from Literature

There is an assumption in this question that is perfectly understandable. Watching a movie is about as difficult as falling off a log. Almost everyone gets the hand of it early in life and with minimal instruction. Nonetheless, film instructors have found plenty to teach their students. There are first the techniques of filmmaking, such as camera angles, editing, and lighting. As with techniques of writing, each help to shape a story, and we know that how a story is told is part of the story. (Remember Marshall McLuhan?) Like the novelist, film directors have recognizable styles and recurring preoccupations. For most film scholars, the study of film began with the recognition of these parallels, which generated a school of criticism called auteurism, now much discredited, pushed aside by newer notions.

Actually, although movies are still simple enough to make sense of, as a subject of study they have become nearly incomprehensible. In the last fifteen years, an academic discipline has sprung up around the subject, and much of the effort has gone to making film study intellectually respectable. Pick up a film journal and have a go at any article dealing with semiological, ideological, or neo-Freudian analysis, and you will see what I mean. Serious film scholars don't fool around.

From the start, film courses meant studying the classics of cinema: *The Seventh Seal, Grand Illusion, The Blue Angel, Citizen Kane, Potemkin.* Like literary classics, these films rewarded repeated viewings; for each there was more, you might say, than met the eye. In the Sixties, the best examples of an emerging international cinema were evidence that the corpus of cinematic literature would continue to grow. Each new Bergman film was easily as compelling as any good modern novel or drama, dealing with moral themes and raising imponderable questions. The French New Wave challenged the conventions of film narrative, while British cinema flowered with a new gritty realism. Almost everywhere (except Hollywood) films poured forth that were thought-provoking and artful. And at colleges and universities, cinema began winning a place for itself among the humanities.

"What a relief," I can hear you say. "I thought you guys were trying to teach them Abbott and Costello movies."

Don't get ahead of me.

It was one thing to be charmed by Truffaut's *Jules and Jim* and Godard's *Breathless,* or intrigued by Fellini's *8½*; undergraduates, raised on TV sitcoms and various types of small screen melodrama, were not so easily won over. They responded vaguely to Bergman's "nordic blues," in Joni Mitchell's apt phrase, but the rest for them has heavy going. Boring, you could say.

First there was the problem of the language barrier. "It was in some other language," complained one student about Pasolini's *Gospel According to St. Matthew,* "Not the one that's in the Bible. And the words were written in English at the bottom of the screen, which was very distracting."

Then there was the problem of bridging historical gaps. "Were the Nazis ever in Italy?" someone asked, bewildered by events in Rossellini's *Rome, Open City,* a moving portrait of Rome's anti-fascist underground during World War II. Screening Eisenstein's *Potemkin* required a lecture on Karl Marx. And judging by the blank faces, I was either doing a bad job of it or revealing myself as politically suspect. (Maybe neither. In a current composition class, I have students who think capitalism has something to do with punctuation.)

Some *have* doubted the soundness of my mental health. Once, a course evaluation by my students turned up the sober observation that I must be "sick," not only for screening Dali and Buñuel's hilariously surrealistic *Un Chien Adalou* but for standing at the back of the room by the projector and actually laughing out loud.

In time, I realized that showing them Renoir was like putting Flaubert into the hands of fourth-graders. It wouldn't work. If sub-titles and sub-text made them groan, I would relent and come home to Hollywood.

Film scholarship had taken the same turn. European critics had long been singing praises of American directors. Westerns and gangster movies became OK. So did musicals. Film criticism in the Seventies was all-embracing; everything was grist for its mill. At a three-week summer course offered by the British Film Institute in 1976, the films under discussion included *Dirty Harry, North by Northwest,* and *Finian's Rainbow.* ("That old devil moon . . .")

The return of the English language in my film classes

Capitalizing on a superficial resemblance to literature, film studies joined the humanities in our colleges and universities under false pretenses.

was a hit, even if my pick of films was still hit and miss. The simplicity and strong plot lines of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Of Mice and Men* won my student's hearts. But how they hated *Member of the Wedding.* Joseph Losey and Harold Pinter's wonderfully ambiguous *Accident* left them cold, if not hostile, while Fritz Lang's grim and downbeat picture of police work, *The Big Heat,* elicited snickers.

What am I doing, I would ask myself after screenings, packing away reels of 16mm film, the lights up in the empty classroom. I didn't know. I wondered if it was much different from studying comic books. It was certainly a far cry from Homer and Dante. ("Homer who?" I can hear from the back row.)

Which brings this rambling discourse around to my retired schoolmaster friend's opinion of "the pictures." Take them as seriously as you like, most movies exist first as entertainment. They are diversions and distractions for people who may or may not have better things to do—like "homework." If you're not struggling with *Grand Illusion,* then maybe it would be better just to forget about trying to teach film. As a fellow English prof once put it so well, the movie projector is a Trojan horse; you wheel it into the classroom at your own peril.

Capitalizing on a superficial resemblance to literature, film study has joined the humanities under false pretenses. "Film has nothing to do with literature," Ingmar Bergman wrote, years ago. The power of film, he maintained, is its ability to bypass the intellect and go straight to the emotions. The movie-goer apprehends meaning directly, without having first to decode the written word. Bergman thought this was a good thing. And it is. But not for someone who still wants film to do the work of literature—both to teach and delight. Go to the movies with young people and you'll see what I mean.

On Seeing as Different from Watching

Movie-going at colleges is first of all a social act. At the student-run film series on my campus, people do not sit quietly, enveloped in a cloak of darkness, attentive only to the images projected on the screen. For them, films invite participation. Audiences talk to the screen, cheering, jeering, whistling, clapping, laughing at one another's wisecracks.

The quintessential participatory film is *The Rocky Horror Picture Show,* which is to Bergman what punk rock is to Mozart. The audience shows up in costume, with bags of gag props. There is dancing in the aisles and ritual responses to lines spoken by the actors. You have to be there.

The aesthetic young people bring to films is hard to pin down. It is certainly not literary. Talking about films, my students tend toward either Gene Shalit's style of witty putdowns or Rex Reed's effusive superlatives. Plot is what they claim to like most, and characters to identify with, but when they discuss a movie's merits, comments usually focus on believability. "It looked like a low-budget movie," they said of *Every Which Way But Loose,* meaning the effort to achieve a plausible illusion was cheap and shoddy, half-hearted. "It wasn't realistic," they said.

"I could believe that," some said of wildly improbable films like *Up In Smoke* and *Animal House,* both box office hits with college audiences. I gather that what's believable and realistic for them has more to do with wish fulfillment than any kind of logic or verisimilitude. Common sense and good judgment are suspended as soon as the house lights go down, and the submerged id rises to the surface in the glow reflecting dimly from the screen—like Nessie coming up for a midnight swim around the loch.

Anti-feminism lurks in the darkness among audiences on my campus. In *The Deerhunter,* a cheer went up when one of the bridesmaids was slugged in the wedding sequence. In *Every Which Way But Loose,* voices pleaded with Clint Eastwood to belt the woman he discovers is unfaithful to him.

There is also a hunger for physical abuse, pain, and blood-letting. After more than an hour of unrelenting violence in the prison film *Midnight Express,* there is one moment of tenderness when the male friend of the protagonist reaches out to caress him lovingly. The ironic significance of the scene couldn't have been clearer, yet behing me a young woman said with revulsion, "Oh, that's gross!"

Unlike literature, films often do their best to blunt humane sensibilities rather than nurture them. The horror movie *Halloween,* a big grosser in more ways than one, creates unlikable characters who are stalked and murdered by a madman. The victims in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* are similarly unsympathetic, allowing audiences to relish the gruesomely graphic slaughter, while caring only whether they'll be able to stomach it.

I escaped from a dorm screening of this movie during a reel change, leaving behind a roomful of delightedly sickened young viewers. One of my brightest students, a philosophy major, followed me out, eager for my opinion of what he considered a "brilliant" film. I have rarely felt so remote and alienated from the next generation. Feeding such an appetite for the horrendous surely dehumanizes and brutalizes; it permits the exercise of a vicarious curelty that can't be good for us.

Movies that do not make it at the theatre box office are instructive. Consider *Don't Look Now,* a 1973 chiller recently revived on Home Box Office. The film is about a man who doesn't know that he has psychic powers. Gorgeously photographed, imaginatively edited, and

Perhaps it takes a literary background to give a movie-goer a reflective bias. If so, let us get movies out of the classroom and students back into books.

nicely creepy, this film also happens to care about its characters. A drowned child haunts the picture, not with the malevolence we expect of departed spirits in today's horror films, but with the deep sense of loss that attends the death of children in the actual world. This truth-to-life is off-putting for Hollywood's youthful audience, I suspect, because it asks them to feel when they would rather just watch.

A stunningly visual film, it also asks them to see. Which, like feeling, is a good deal different from just watching. The title *Don't Look Now* is ironic, for in every frame director Nicholas Roeg's photography says, "Look at this. Forget the story for a minute, and just *look* at this." But the 17,000 hours of television supposedly logged by entering college freshmen seem to have made of them merely detached viewers rather than absorbed seers. There is a belief that movies are the natural medium of the younger generation, that being raised on TV they have come by a high degree of "visual literacy" that compensates for their apparently diminished capacities for reading and writing. I doubt this. My most perceptive film students have usually been adept at expressing themselves with words; the two things go together.

Saying What Cannot be Said in Words

After almost a decade of teaching, writing, and thinking about film, I've come to the conclusion that seeing is what audiences do least of in the movies. They have learned how to extract the story line, to ascertain the elements of dramatic conflict, pick out the main characters and distinguish the good guys from the bad guys. But in many movies, that constitutes no more than about five percent of what is on the screen. Much of what you need to know to follow the story, in fact, is on the soundtrack. This is even truer of television, which is still little more than a kind of illustrated radio. Just about the flimsiest story line can divert the attention of an audience from the total content of the images.

The best movies, for my money, are strongly visual rather than strongly narrative. It is a point I make least successfully with my students, who are, as I've described above, strictly in their own zone as movie-goers. "The task I'm trying to achieve is above all to make you see," said pioneer American director D. W. Griffith in 1913. Show me, show me, I reply, a lone voice raised in the darkness.

The question is not what or how much we see in movies, if we do look. What's important is the *way* we see, responding to photographed images with a sense of wonder, indentification, engagement, caring, remembering that the camera is a seeing-machine, an aid to the eye like the microscope, telescope, or X-ray. In John Schlesinger's *Yanks,* for instance, there is first of all the evocation of a moment in history (1943-44), recreated in meticulous detail. The past is not just brought to life; it is made present, in that way peculiar to the medium of film (There is no "past tense" in movies). The camera lingers on faces and slowly scans the environment, weaving together the fabric of a time and place and the human life lived there, letting us see, see, see. What does it matter whether there is a "story"?

I am with Brecht in his attempt to dislodge the audience from fixating on dramatic illusion. If you spend enough time with films, you can begin noticing every cut, and be aware of the presence of a camera crew for each shot, and of actors giving performances that have been discussed with directors, speaking lines written by writers. Instead of spoiling a film, this detachment can free you to experience it on a multitude of levels. We see a character on the screen, for instance, maybe Conrad in *Ordinary People,* and behind him the actor, Timothy Hutton. And we may be moved by his resemblance to his father, the late Jim Hutton, dimly aware that the performance, so powerful, is being etched from possibly a very deep experience of life. And there is director Robert Redford, never in front of the camera, but still present in every image, and we think of the writer, giving shape in scenes and lines of dialogue to characters and ideas already introduced in Judith Guest's novel. The collaborative effort of movie making is a marvel in itself.

You're free, also, to think of the actual people and events alluded to by the film—the actual emotional agonies of adolescents, their ever-rising suicide rate, the disintegrating American family. In some movies you can sense the collective life of social classes, generations, whole cultures. The intensity of film as an art for me depends on this inter-play between the illusion of reality, the effort made to craft the illusion, and the human experience that filmmakers and performers draw on to create illusion.

Novelist Ursula LeGuin said, "The artist deals with what cannot be said in words. The artist whose medium is fiction does this *in words.* The novelist says in words what cannot be said in words." For me, movies embrace a similar paradox. Calling forth images that pretend to be what they are not, movies have the power to put us in touch with deeper realities than even the camera can record. This is an experience of film that makes of it one of the humanities for me—not literature, but something like it. Possibly it takes a background in literature to give a movie-goer this kind of reflective bias. If so, that is all the more reason to get movies out of the classroom and see to it that students are reading again—finding out who Homer was—so that some day movies might mean more to them than just the promise of cheap thrills.

The Augsburg Confession Today

For the Lutheran Church, For the One Church

David G. Truemper

The four hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, observed during 1980, has provided an occasion for Lutherans to make a fresh assessment of their basic confessional statement and to come to a new appreciation of how that document enables them to play as responsible a role in the one church today as the confessors sought to play at Augsburg in 1530. Though Lutherans have tended to be quite possessive about the Augsburg Confession (CA) as their very own document (and why not, since, it seems, no one else has wanted to claim it?), nevertheless it has been evident in the language of the past year's celebrations that the CA belongs to the whole church.

The Augsburg Confession, the cause of all the anniversary activity, was presented by several princes and cities of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to the emperor, Charles V, and the other estates and cities, in the assembly at Augsburg on June 25, 1530. Written by a team of theologians and jurists and largely drafted by Luther's university colleague Philip Melanchthon, the Augsburg Confession was a response to the emperor's summons to give an account of the reforms which had been introduced into the churches in several of the German territories under the impetus of the reform movement centered at the University of Wittenberg and more particularly in the work of Martin Luther. After about six weeks of conversations among representatives of the two sides (in which the political factors came to outweigh the theological factors), the negotiations were broken off and the emperor declared the CA to have been refuted. Though that judgment was never officially echoed by the Bishop of Rome, the two sides have since then gone their separate ways—accompanied by mutual suspicion, condemnation, and conflict. The CA very quickly became a rallying-point for the beleaguered reformation estates, and it served from then on as the fundamental statement of the self-understanding of the churches that came to be called "Lutheran."

Typically, the anniversary year has been marked by renewed study, an impressively vigorous publication program, and an amazing number of joint Lutheran/Roman Catholic worship services and para-liturgical events. The study has gone on at many levels; from joint commissions of established scholars to graduate and undergraduate classrooms to public lectures to parish and inter-parish study groups (often made up of both Lutherans and Roman Catholics, clergy and laity alike). These study programs have in many instances brought Lutherans from the various church bodies together in joint study and work—something that may go far toward finally giving the lie to the assertions of some that there are significant and serious divergences among at least some of those Lutheran church bodies.

The publications that have hit the bookshelves and mailboxes during the past year with the results of much of that study are more numerous than even the most avid readers of confessionally-oriented literature could hope to absorb and digest. From Germany alone, not surprisingly, have come dozens of major books and scores of substantial journal articles. It would require a team of scholars to assemble the relevant bibliography, and such a bibliography would provide more than enough material for a study (of major proportions) of the new spirit at work in world Lutheranism.

In Germany and in the United States there have been vigorous programs promoting renewed conversation between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. These conversations, frequently riding on the backs of the highly productive dialogues carried out over the past fifteen years by representatives of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical Affairs and Lutheran World Ministries (the United States arm of the Lutheran World Federation), have been diverse, broadly based, and frequently very productive. Formally and informally, Lutherans and Roman Catholics have been conversing with one another to an unprecedented degree and with unprecedented openness and with unprecedented results. And the CA has been the focus for those conversations.

Significantly, joint study and joint conversation have also led to joint worship. Lutherans and Roman Catholics gather for liturgical observances of the anniversary of the CA! What seemed unthinkable not many years ago is now occurring in many places—urban centers and small towns alike. It is striking that Christians from these traditions find occasion—and justification—for joint worship but it is more striking that they find such occasion and justification in the celebration of the anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. In the minds of many people from both traditions, the CA has stood as a symbol of our dividedness. It has been recognized

David G. Truemper *is Associate Professor of Theology at Valparaiso University. In the past year of commemorating the Augsburg Confession, Dr. Truemper has participated in four day-long conversations between the theological faculties of Valparaiso and Notre Dame universities and given a number of lectures on the Augsburg Confession to Lutheran and Roman Catholic meetings of the laity around the country.*

Presently one might suppose that Lutherans are truly Lutherans only when they believe the right propositions about the Bible or follow the latest directives from denominational headquarters.

as the "particular confession" of Lutheranism. It has been condemned as the document which fractured the visible unity of the church in the west. And yet, at its 450th anniversary, thousands of Roman Catholics have found cause to give thanks to God for the document.

All of this, of course, stands in rather sharp contrast with the sort of events which surrounded previous anniversaries of the Augsburg Confession. Those earlier celebrations were, it seems, regularly used as occasions for stressing the particularity and peculiarity of the Lutheran Churches. Like the traditional *Reformationsfest* at the 31st of October, the anniversaries of the CA provided opportunity for expressions of Lutheran chauvinism and for blasts at Roman Catholicism, "popery," and similar evils. To be sure, that spirit is still evident in some circles. In what is surely one of the more extreme expressions of that view, the president of one of the small, separatistic Lutheran bodies was reported to have bemoaned the use of the Augsburg Confession in inter-church conversation: the CA, he worried, was being turned into an "ecumenical document"!

A Conservation of the Conversation

In the wake of the kind of observances which have accompanied the anniversary during 1980, it is useful to ask once more about the nature and intention of the Augsburg Confession and its original signatories, about the significance for contemporary Lutherans that the CA remains the basic confessional writing of their tradition and thus the fundamental determinant of what it means to be "Lutheran," and about the suitability of making the CA the focus for Lutheran/Roman Catholic conversation and *rapprochement.*

It is hard to find a Lutheran who wants to say anything negative about the Augsburg Confession. Lutherans generally speak well of the CA, insisting that it is the foundational and determinative document for specifying what it means to be a Lutheran, and placing it at the head of the list of their confessional writings. In many ways this is a hopeful sign. For there are other ways by which one might seek to define what it means to be a Lutheran. One might (and many have) appeal to the corpus of Luther's writings, and thus seek to settle the questions of Lutheran identity by references to the appropriate volume, page, and line of the *Weimarer Ausgabe* of Luther's writings. Others at other times have shown an inclination to define "Lutheranness" as "anti-Roman-Catholic," or as "neo-evangelicals who also believe in baptismal regeneration and the real presence." By way of contrast, the steady appeal of Lutherans to the CA points the way to maintaining continuity between the present expression of Lutheran churchliness and its origins in the first attempts at a religious settlement in the Reformation era.

Taking the Augsburg Confession seriously can provide an uncomfortable challenge to today's Lutheran churches. Article 7 speaks of what is sufficient for the true unity of the church; yet whole bodies of Lutherans have insisted on a lot more than what is labeled "sufficient" there. Article 14 commits Lutherans to allow only ordained clergy to preside at the eucharist, yet one repeatedly hears of unordained presidents at Lutheran celebrations of the holy communion. Article 24 commits Lutherans to a celebration of the holy communion as the chief service on every Sunday and holy day, yet we only rarely manage even a weekly celebration. Article 25 insists that private "confession has not been abolished"; yet, for all practical purposes, it has been abolished. Article 4 confesses that we receive forgiveness and are justified "when we believe that Christ suffered for us"; yet one often hears statements which lead one to suppose that we are truly Lutherans only when we believe the right propositions about the Bible, or when we follow directives from headquarters, or when we succeed in applying so-called church growth principles. Any perceptive observer of contemporary Lutheran church life could add his or her own list of similar breaches. After all, the course of history and the pressures of acculturation in America's "Protestant Empire" have taken their toll; American Lutherans are very much a protestant group. And that very protestant character is evidence of the gap between the vision of the confessors at Augsburg and the reality of present-day North American Lutheranism. What, then, if we took the CA seriously again?

Two assumptions shape the discussion which follows; these must be briefly accounted for. First, it is assumed that the Augsburg Confession may rightly be taken seriously by contemporary Lutherans, that the CA is no mere relic from another time and another place, and that there is sufficient theological and historical warrant for the continued use of the CA as the basic statement of Lutheranness. Granted, this assumption is open to challenge; the present essay is, however, not the place to argue the grounds for this assumption. Second, it is assumed that the Augsburg Confession is to be taken for what it is, namely, a confession of the common Christian faith, called forth by the pressure of circumstances in 1530 and thus a document submitted in a political, not an ecclesiastical, forum. The CA is in that sense inextricably tied to the events and the circumstances of the German reform movement of the early sixteenth century. What follows is an attempt to treat the CA accordingly and to avoid making it out to be something else.

Responsible use of the Augsburg Confession by today's Lutherans would mean, first and foremost, to take seriously its confession of the gospel as the ground, center, and criterion for the whole life and mission of the church. More than anything else, the CA embodies

Subscribing to the Augsburg Confession, however, means that Lutherans recover a sense of being a confessing movement within the church catholic—as opposed to being a settled denomination.

an approach to the life and work of the church that is radically gospel-oriented. In the language of the reformers "gospel" means the promise that on account of the crucified and risen Jesus God will forgive the sins of those who believe his promise and will, through such faith, grant them a place in his fellowship and family as his daughters and sons. In their view, "gospel" is not a collection of doctrinal statements, but rather the announcement, in word and sacraments, that God truly grants forgiveness to believers through his Holy Spirit. Put most simply, that means that the center of churchly concern and the content of churchly life and work is to be the message of God's gracious offer of forgiveness, to be received with trust in the promise. The consequences of that are massive. If the gospel is the ground and center and criterion for church life and work, then nothing else is—not even the Scriptures as such, to say nothing of organizational programs and procedures and progress.

Lutheran Acculturation to Protestantism

At a second level, serious commitment to have one's vision of the church informed by the Augsburg Confession would mean an active commitment and serious work to recover and maintain the unity of the church. The CA was submitted to the estates of the Holy Roman Empire precisely because a break in the unity of the church within Germany was quite unthinkable! The signatories of the CA intended with their confession to be offering grounds for not breaking the unity of the church. In their Preface, the confessors pledged their readiness

> to have all of us embrace and adhere to a single true religion and live together in unity and in one fellowship and church, even as we are all enlisted under one Christ [Preface, 4].

So committed were they for real, practiced, lived-out unity and fellowship that, even if the other parties to the discussions at Augsburg would not comply with the imperial summons, and even if no results would come from the negotiations at the Diet,

> nevertheless we on our part shall not omit doing anything, in so far as God and conscience allow, that may serve the cause of Christian unity [Preface, 13].

To be sure, the CA has functioned as a symbol of the disunity of the church; some have even championed that disunity as something salutary. Fact is, however, that the CA was born of a commitment to church unity; to take it seriously today would mean sharing that commitment, now to recover and then to maintain the unity which the Spirit gives. For many Lutherans, that would mean a radical and probably painful about-face in their posture toward other Christians, particularly toward those in obedience to the Bishop of Rome.

A third consequence of a serious commitment to orient the life of today's church to the Augsburg Confession would be a self-conscious reappropriation of the CA's claim to be a confession of the catholic (i.e., common Christian) faith. It was a decisive element in the accusations of the opponents of the Wittenberg-based reformation movement that Luther and his associates had departed from the "catholic faith." That was a serious charge, since imperial law made it a condition of citizenship in Germany, and thus of the right to the protection of imperial government and law, that one adhere to the common Christian faith. When in the spring of 1530 John Eck charged the reformers with heresy and with falling away from the catholic faith, that accusation had repercussions also for the continued citizenship and protection under law of the estates which had authorized the introduction of the reformation in the churches of their territories. Their confession, accordingly, reflected the conviction that the reforms which they had introduced were no aberration or innovation, but were in fact a restoration (as they saw it) of the faith and practice of the early church, the church of the Fathers. Such a conviction is reflected in the conclusion to the first part of the CA:

> Since this teaching is grounded clearly on the Holy Scriptures and is not contrary or opposed to that of the universal Christian [the Latin version reads, "catholic"] church, or even of the Roman church (in so far as the latter's teaching is reflected in the writings of the Fathers), we think that our opponents cannot disagree with us in the articles set forth above [i.e., articles 1 through 21].

The claim of the Lutheran estates was that they were adhering to the catholic faith, that the first 21 articles of their confession constituted a statement of that catholic faith, and that they expected a reply from the other party which affirmed the catholicity of their confession and thus of their churches. Accordingly, a contemporary signatory of the CA ought to reflect a similar conviction in making the CA his or her own confession. "This is the catholic faith, isn't it?" is the implicit comment of the contemporary adherent of the CA. And that virtually requires that there be another Christian within earshot of that confession, especially one of the successors of the "other party" at Augsburg in 1530, to hear and respond to such confessing of the faith!

For that to happen, contemporary Lutherans will have to draw a fourth consequence from their commitment to have their identity shaped by their fathers' confession at Augsburg: they will have to risk being open and vulnerable to a great deal of change and growth. They will have to demonstrate a church life that is as catholic as the one which the CA calls for—or else a contemporary subscription to the CA will prove to be a sham and an hypocrisy. Such openness might well strike many modern Lutherans as more drastic

A confessional document is never a one-way statement, but rather part of a conversation. A confessing movement is made by people whose ears are at least as open as their mouths.

than they are prepared for. For example, it would call for a more lively sacramental church life, for a more careful integration of the ministries of the ordained servants of word and sacrament with the ministries of the whole royal priesthood, and for a more evident preservation of continuity with the liturgical and theological tradition of the western (and the early) church.

For example, the recurring plea in both parts of the CA that no innovations, either in doctrine or in practice, were allowed, and that the reforms in theology and liturgy were in accord with early and medieval precedents, would surely call for a recovery of patristic studies in Lutheran seminaries, and for a more evident readiness to reflect the catholic tradition in the contemporary church's liturgical life; minimally, the recovery of the tradition in the eucharistic prayer and the offertory would be called for. Article 24 claims that "no novelty has been introduced. . . and. . . no conspicuous change has been made in the public ceremony of the Mass."

In addition, contemporary signatories of the Augsburg Confession will find it necessary, if their subscription is to mean anything at all, to recover a sense of being part of a confessing movement within the catholic church—as opposed to the settled and denominational mentality which seems to dominate today's Lutherans in North America. The denomination is a distinctively American contribution to (or is it a trivialization of?) church life. Denominations are the major consequence of the American "arrangement"—by means of which it became possible for churches to compete in an officially non-competitive way. Denominations would seem unthinkable within the mentality of the confessors at Augsburg, for denominations imply a curious mixture of pluralism and exclusivism—and the central concern at Augsburg was neither pluralism nor exclusivism but the preservation of the unity of the one church. A confessing movement, in contrast with modern denominational thinking, begins from the premise and confession of one church; it is prepared to suffer the loss of almost everything but that which makes the church church, and that, in the catholic and evangelical view, is the gospel.

In addition, confessors listen for the echo to their confession; after all, confession is wrung out of confessors by the pressure and the demands—and usually the overt show of power—of some external forces, and those from whom the confession is squeezed are very much dependent upon the response of the "other" party. Confession is never a one-way statement, but rather a part of a conversation. A confessing movement is made up of people whose ears are at least as open as their mouths. And if—or when—the response is positive, there is no further need of confessing. Confessing movements are prepared to confess themselves out of business; indeed, they hope to go out of existence. The confessors at Augsburg presented their confession under imperial duress; they indicated their readiness to participate in negotiation (their own word!), and they intended to leave no stone unturned on the way to an amicable resolution of the differences between themselves and those loyal to the Roman see. A good deal of change and growth, then, would be required of modern American Lutheran denominations, if they were to show themselves ready to self-destruct—along with their bureaucracies, their pension and trust funds, their investments, their distinctive service books, and their jealous protection of their own particular interests.

A Confessional Commitment to Unity

Finally, a serious commitment to have one's Lutheranness decisively shaped by the Augsburg Confession would involve Lutherans in a frank recognition of the fact that the CA is a historically-conditioned document, a confession called forth by the particular pressures of 1530 and one taking the shape that it did as a result of the particular people and insights that were available for its production. Thus the CA is not a timeless document, something above and beyond the relativities of human history. Nor is it a living magisterium, a developing and adapting embodiment of a teaching authority for today's church, able to speak competently and evangelically on matters of faith and morals. The CA is not open to a repristinating treatment; we cannot simply quote appropriate passages from the document and suppose that we have thereby spoken adequately for the contemporary situation. We cannot go back to 1530 and live in that situation. And we cannot wrench the CA out of its context and suppose that it speaks directly and without interpretation to our situation.

There are many contemporary issues to which the CA simply does not speak—such as the question of the sex of a candidate for the sacred ministry, or the question of public policy on such matters as abortion legislation, or the role of the papacy in the church (that lack was noted as early as 1537 and led to the writing of the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*). To have one's fundamental posture today determined by a confession now four hundred and fifty years old means that one will have to give that document a sensitive and historically-astute reading. One will have to ascertain as well as possible why the confession took the shape it did, why it failed to take up topics like indulgences, the papacy, the authority of the scriptures, and the like, and why it made the sort of witness to the gospel in the church that it did. Only under such circumstances will Lutherans be helped by the CA to make a similar confession of the gospel in the radically altered situation of today.

The Roman Catholic church has such a living magisterium, one which in a number of ways seeks to instruct

And when the response to the confession is positive, there is no further need of confessing. A confessing movement is ready to confess itself out of business; indeed that is its hope.

the faithful in the modern situation, and which does so on a number of widely-ranging and utterly practical subjects, ranging from the development of peoples to ecumenical relations to the practical matters of liturgical reform and renewal. And the Roman Catholic church thus faces its own set of problems, not least the problem of that magisterium's inability to achieve universal acceptability and to appear convincing to all the faithful. (That, at least, is one way of describing the crisis about "infallibility" which has its recent focus in the Kueng affair.) Lutherans, on the other hand, have a set of problems which correspond to their situation: What does one say that is in accord with the Augsburg Confession if one must speak about Jewish-Christian relations? About moral issues connected with atomic weapons? About ordaining women to the pastoral office?

The suspicion lies ready at hand that the continuing divisions among Lutherans may at least in part reflect differences of opinion about how to make judgments about faith and morals in a church that is given fundamental shape by a sixteenth century document. The recent conventions of The American Lutheran Church and of the Lutheran Church in America reflect that kind of diversity, particularly on some of the issues mentioned above; and the ongoing opposition of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to the ordination of women to the pastoral office reflects a similar diversity along denominational lines.

Reformation Without Deformation

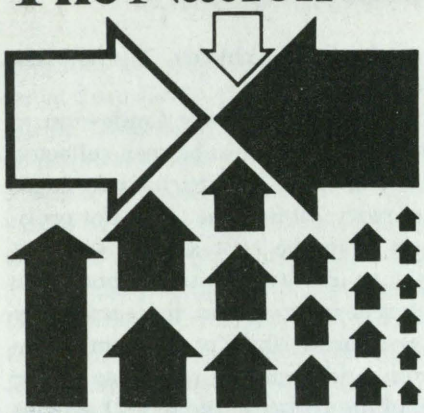
To what, then, does the Augsburg Confession commit its contemporary adherents? Beyond, or beneath, the specific postures to which the CA commits Lutherans are a pair of concerns, concerns which reflect the orientation of the two key articles in the first part of the Augsburg Confession. Article 4 on justification provides the focus for the steady orientation of the CA to the gospel, the good news of forgiveness "by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith"; and article 7 provides the focus for the deep churchly concern of the confessors, expressed in their definition of the church as the assembling of believers around the gospel preached and the sacraments done in their midst, a church whose unity, like its very existence, is given and preserved by the gospel and the sacraments. The abiding concern of a church oriented by the CA will be for the continuing renewal of the church in such a way that the church's unity is preserved. It will be a concern for reformation without deformation, and thus for a mixture of continuity and newness, for the preservation of catholic substance while continuing to apply the evangelical principle. *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church always to be reformed) is a slogan that works properly only when the *semper* is taken to apply equally with *ecclesia* and with *reformanda*. To be reformed, yet always the church. The church, yet always to be reformed.

The twin orientation of the Augsburg Confession to the gospel and to the church may also be seen reflected in the readiness of the confessors to participate in negotiations with the other party. In fact, the CA is not properly understood apart from the context into which it was first read, namely, to initiate discussion about how to deal with the reforms instituted in the (especially northern) German territories while at the same time preserving the catholic and churchly substance of the faith. The confession of the gospel in the first 21 articles of the CA, though given *magno consensu* (with great consensus), is nevertheless a provisional confession. It is as if the confessors had prefixed to their confession some introduction such as this: "What follows is a summary of how we understand the gospel; this is in fact the catholic faith, is it not?" Then, upon the conclusion of the reading of the CA, one adds: "That is how we understand the gospel and regulate some of the affairs in our churches; this is the catholic church, is it not?" Though the CA was presented on the basis of a consensus among the reformers, it points toward and appeals to a future council which was seen to lie beyond the negotiations which were to take place in Augsburg in the summer of 1530.

There is no need, then, for contemporary Lutherans to insist on the thoroughness and total adequacy of the Augsburg confession. It is safe to admit that the document is limited, partial, inexorably tied to its sixteenth-century setting. Yet it can serve even four and a half centuries later as a most helpful paradigm for confessing the gospel and for continuing the reforming of the church. It will serve best when it is taken for what it is—a provisional statement of the gospel and of some principles for renewing the life of the church while preserving its unity, a stage in extended conversations with other Christians and their (equally provisional) confessions.

Who knows, maybe the celebrations in 1980 will have some genuine carry-over value for the celebrants; the conversations which we have begun around this very "ecumenical document" might just continue. And if they do, Lutherans will find that their conversation partners also have a vision of catholicity and of evangelical reform. What is likely to happen at that stage of the conversation will, I suspect, be self-evidently close to the *parousia* of our Lord, whose prayer for the unity of his followers would then be close to realization. For then the discussions would evidently be "within the family" of his dear Father, and no longer part of denominational "foreign policy." The Augsburg Confession as a confession for the one church is surely a step in that direction. Will we resume the conversation to which the Augsburg Confession commits us?

The Nation



The political instincts of the president look less neo-conservative than paleoconservative.

The Prospects Of the Reagan Presidency

On Continuing the Republican Revival And Conservative Surge

James Nuechterlein

That which seemed, to many, the unthinkable has become the unbearable: Ronald Reagan has won the White House. As Mark Hanna is supposed to have said on Theodore Roosevelt's accession to the presidency, "Now look, that damn cowboy is President of the United States." So he is, and that is so because of Jimmy Carter's failures, Ronald Reagan's successes, and the American people's shift to the political Right. What Reagan will do with his victory (this is written in late November) is still unclear.

As has been argued in these columns before, much of what went wrong for Carter was not of his making, but neither was he simply an innocent victim of circumstances. Carter's was an incoherent presidency, one lacking in definition, leadership qualities, or sense of direction. His vague and inconsistent moralism could not substitute for his utter lack of ideological purpose. If he had any sense of where he was going, he never managed to transmit that sense to the public. He was a kind of technocratic boy scout, and when the men around him failed to perform at a minimum standard of competence, he had no reservoir of personal popularity or ideological commitment from which he could draw to carry him through the hard times. He was, as everyone conceded, a decent and intelligent man, but so are a lot of people who never get close to becoming President. Even the one thing he had done superbly well—run for office—could not be sustained. His re-election campaign turned into a dolorous disaster—negative, mean-spirited, and desperate.

It is currently fashionable to argue that Carter will look better in retrospect than he did to his contemporaries. My own guess is that his will turn out to have been an utterly forgettable presidency, one that will barely register on the nation's historical memory. A presidency that could not be defined will not likely be much remembered.

But Reagan is not President simply because of Carter's ineffectuality. No politician in recent American history has been so consistently underrated as has the new President. Reagan is quite simply the most effective campaigner in contemporary America, and the failure of large segments of the media to recognize this (at least before November 4) can only be explained as a case of ideological aversion obscuring plain reality. The press and his political opponents had great fun portraying Reagan as a combination of amiable boob and fringe lunatic, but when, during the debate with Carter, he came across as neither, he gained an easy victory simply by virtue of not making a fool of himself. Those on the Left who insist on defining as simple-minded any version of reality other than their own will continue to make political life easier for their conservative opponents than it ought to be.

In the end, however, the results of the election cannot be understood simply by reference to the personal or political qualities of the presidential candidates. The American people have moved Right, and the extent of their move may be measured by comparing Reagan's landslide with that of Richard Nixon in 1972. Nixon defeated George McGovern by a margin substantially greater than Reagan achieved over Carter, but in 1972 the Republicans lost two Senate seats. In 1980 the Republicans gained twelve, and in the process they decimated the ranks of Democratic liberals. Carter's personal unpopularity acted as a drag on the ticket—most of the liberals ran considerably better than he did—but there was still a clear national trend in the United States on election day, and it transcended individual cases and circumstances.

Nor was the election merely a random blip on the political radar screen. It was rather the culmination of a trend which began in the late Sixties and which was deflected but not destroyed by Watergate. Nixon's disgrace required that the Republican party be punished for its leader's sins, but that disgrace only served to delay a process of realignment whose dimensions are not yet fully clear but which are likely very considerable.

Much of the media explanation of Reagan's victory has focused on his margins among the fundamentalist/evangelical enthusiasts of the Moral Majority or the tunnel-visioned ideologues of the New Right. In the long run, however, his majorities among blue-collar workers and Roman Catholics are almost certainly of greater significance. In cracking the white-working-class

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If the presidency of Ronald Reagan turns out not to be extremist it will be because his Eisenhower temperament triumphs over his Goldwater philosophy.

and ethnic blocs, Reagan has mortally damaged the New Deal liberal coalition that has dominated American political life for close to half a century. We cannot be certain, of course, that he will be able to hold his new converts, but the fact of their conversion cannot lightly be dismissed.

Reagan and his conservative allies did so well because liberalism in America is philosophically in disarray and politically in deep trouble. Preoccupied with where it has been, it seems to have little idea of where it should be going. The *New Republic,* which has for most of this century served as the flagship of journalistic liberalism, recently summarized the problem: "There is a consensus building in the Democratic party that old-style liberalism must be redefined for the 1980s. The problem, though, is that no one knows what the new agenda ought to be."

As another article in that same issue of the *New Republic* pointed out, liberals too often seem locked in the past, defining economic problems in terms of the Great Depression (as if our current primary conundrum were still unemployment and widespread poverty rather than inflation) and racial problems in terms of the racism of our segregationist past (as if the civil rights revolution of the last twenty years—"the most massive change in racial attitudes, in behavior by whites, and in the law that ever has been wrought peacefully in a major industrial country"—had not occurred). As that article concluded, "when liberals persist in seeing the United States in a perspective which is sharply critical, and which is no longer accurate, they risk being seen not as idealistic reformers but rather as anti-American cranks."

It is, above all else, in its inability to deal with the crisis of inflation that New Deal liberalism has most clearly indicated its contemporary irrelevance. Ever since the 1930s, American liberals have geared their major economic policies toward stimulation of the economy along Keynesian lines. Those policies were relatively successful and highly popular for a very long time, but liberals have been unable to adjust to the new economic conditions of the Seventies. Indeed, they have seemed incapable even of comprehending what ought to be done. Senator Ted Kennedy's economically dubious and politically unattractive solution of mandatory controls reveals the poverty of current liberal thought.

The Republicans' recent enthusiasm for supply-side fiscal policies may be rooted in an economic illusion, as critics insist, but the new approach at least provides a potential alternative to the failed policies of the recent past, and the American people are ready to try anything. Some of them may even remember Franklin Roosevelt's argument that in a time of crisis for which old policies offer no solution, experimentation with the untried provides the only hope.

The failure of liberal economic policy is not the whole story of the election—foreign policy issues and social discontents (abortion, women's lib, busing and quotas, gay rights) also contributed to the conservative surge—but it is the essential story. Americans still normally vote their pocketbooks over their sense of national honor or their cultural alienation. If they sometimes appear mean-spirited or reactionary today, it is because those to whom they have for so long looked for leadership have misled and failed them. Out of that failure has emerged Reagan's opportunity.

What he is likely to make of it is difficult to discern. In the current honeymoon period accorded to all new Presidents, Reagan is widely being portrayed—more, I think, in hope than on the evidence—as an essential moderate. He seems at heart to be no such thing. If his presidency turns out not to be extremist, it will be because his Eisenhower temperament has triumphed over his Goldwater philosophy. At the level of political instinct, Reagan looks less a neoconservative than a paleoconservative.

At the same time, he is, I am convinced, considerably more able than he is often pictured. He is certainly no deep thinker, but neither were such widely—if variously—successful Presidents as Andrew Jackson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, or Dwight Eisenhower. He is, above all, a masterful political communicator, and that will likely carry him a long way. Reagan radiates confidence and optimism, qualities essential to a successful presidency, and if his ideological instincts lure him to the Right, his public relations instincts may help nudge him back to the Center.

Economic prospects appear so gloomy that the possibility of a major economic collapse must be taken seriously.

James Nuechterlein, *The Cresset* February, 1981, page 14.

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The Editor

In domestic affairs, he may need massive amounts of good luck. Economic prospects appear so gloomy that the possibility of a major economic collapse must be taken seriously. If such a disaster should occur, Reagan and the Republicans will learn, as Herbert Hoover did in 1929, that some elections are better lost. Reagan won by attacking Carter's record on the economy, and he will have to be more forceful, more consistent—and more fortunate—than his predecessor if he entertains hopes of a continued Republican revival in general and a second term for himself in particular.

In foreign policy, he will undoubtedly take a firmer line toward the Soviet Union than did Carter. That holds risks, but it need not mean, despite Carter's campaign scare talk, that nuclear apocalypse waits just around the corner. Reagan is not a madman and neither are those in control of the Kremlin. For too long now, the Russians have managed to get away with a definition of détente that offers them strategic parity while requiring of them no self-restraint in their international behavior outside the realm of direct U.S.-Soviet relations. Reagan's revival of Henry Kissinger's concept of linkage is necessary if détente is to remain politically acceptable to most Americans and if, more importantly, it is not to degenerate into a prescription for American decline. Whether Reagan will be able to bring to Kissinger's formulations Kissinger's subtlety and sophistication remains to be seen.

Let me close on a confessional note. I voted for Ronald Reagan last November, even though he had not been my preferred candidate in the primaries (poor Howard Baker) and even though I had reservations about his political philosophy (I'm neo, not paleo) as well as about his depth of understanding. I only wish I knew better whether, in four years, I will look back on that vote with pride, with embarrassment, or—perhaps this is most likely—with the same sense of ambivalence with which I cast it.

There Is Pain

There is pain
    connected with women.
When the moon, that uncommon rock
begins to silver-light the heavens
they stand at the window
tired evening-women, watching
    listening.
What they hear:
    not the turn of time
    not the buzzing out there
    of the bee-stars
    gold-flecking the sky.
They hear the sound of their blood
    coursing through the ages, toiling
    to pump life into the cosmos.

Sisters, do you still weep
    by the ancient ruined wall
    your hands open
    the webbing of your fingers
    pressed flat against the stones?
Do you still feel, Rachel
    the weight of your dead children?
    With black cloth pulled
    over your face, over your heart
    you broke out
    into one long ululating scream.
Was there silence at last
    when small bones turned brittle
    in the trenches of centuries?

There is pain connected with creation:
    blood, water, red slime
    spill warm from the womb.
    The body of the child
    the body of the world
    do not invent themselves:
    they are born alive
    from quivering flesh
    from cries related to the vibrations
    of all that moves, breathes and is
    here and now, hot with reality.

Sisters
    do not look for symbols
    for second prints of truth:
    open your eyes, let
    ray-beams of sight pierce
    the shell of space, cut a path
    through the darkest night.
    Dive in, enter the multifolds
    of first and primal things
    and from your blood, spin
    these great filaments
    these strands of love
    to wrap and hold the cosmos in.

Catherine de Vinck

Interview

Alan Shapiro: Considerations

Richard Maxwell

A great danger to poetry is purity: the single-minded pursuit of one thing to the exclusion of all else.

Richard Maxwell: Could you tell us what you've been writing lately?
Alan Shapiro: For the last two years I've been writing historical narratives: one long poem or group of poems based on the Irish Potato Famine and another group based on the Puritan experience in America in the early seventeenth century. I began writing the Irish poems pretty much by accident. I had family there, in-laws who still tell stories about the famine and whose lives are still affected by it; their feelings about the British go back to that particular event.

Plus, again by accident, I had to get a job one summer in addition to teaching at Stanford; I worked in the microtext room at the Stanford library. To pass the time I started reading in old issues of the London *Times* and the Manchester *Guardian*; it was interesting to see the way the British press covered the Potato Famine. I decided to write the Irish poems from the British point of view—the oppressor's point of view, since it would have been presumptuous to speak from the point of view of the oppressed. The experience was so foreign to me.

In addition, from the letters in the British newspapers I got the notion of writing letter poems—reports by various officials in England and Ireland to one another—on the way food was distributed to the peasants. I tried to figure out through these poems what makes people do monstrous things: people who are obviously not monsters, who are very well educated and civilized, trying to do the responsible thing—and yet are in a certain sense predestined to violence and stupidity.

Likewise the Puritan colonists: I have written a group of poems on the Salem witchcraft trials. These were partly inspired by rereading Arthur Miller's play, *The Crucible,* really a bad piece of work. Miller got more interested in constructing an allegory of the McCarthy era than in trying to treat this particular episode in our history with any kind of accuracy. And that's another assumption that I'm trying to offset, the notion that artistic excellence and historical fidelity are mutually exclusive. I want to make historical facts humanly realizable without destroying them. I think you try to write about the way people probably acted under distressing circumstances.

Anyway, after doing a lot of reading on the Puritans I discovered that the judges who were responsible for executing these witches were actually good people trying to do good things. They were not vicious and stupid. And indeed the viciousness and stupidity of unintelligent people is not very interesting or even problematical. But the viciousness of smart people is. That was essentially the problem I explored in all of these poems.

In the witchcraft series, specifically, there was the minister of Salem Village, Samuel Parris, whom not much has been written about. His sermons have never been published. After some inquiries I found that the sermons are in manuscript form in the Essex County Courthouse in Connecticut. It's fascinating to read those sermons. Parris assumed the ministry of Salem Village in 1689, and of course the trials for witchcraft didn't break out till 1692. He remained as minister till 1694. There are drastic changes in language from the sermons he wrote in his early years to those he wrote after, when everybody was feeling great remorse. All the contradictory elements of the Puritan character converge in Salem and the mind of that one man. Good writer too: good sermons.

RM: I haven't seen the Salem poems, but the Victorian feeling comes across very strongly in some of the Irish pieces. I like the end of this one here, where

> the electricity
> strikes with the bright and jagged edge of judgement,
> while over each blighted field, a dense fog falls
> cold and damp and close, without any wind.

It sounds like someone who has been reading a little too much Ruskin, mixing Old Testament prophecy and science.

AS: Exactly.

RM: In America, at least, the sort of thing you do is not associated with poetry just now. Why are you writing poetry and not historical novels?

AS: The reason that the kind of poetry I write is unfashionable is that the way people think about poetry has narrowed to the various manifestations of the image. The correlative of the image is human emotion to the exclusion of intelligence, reason. That's just the problem. People assume that poetry—to be poetry—has to show some special use of language that's different in

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kind from other modes of discourse. This very specialized notion of poetry is an historical phenomenon: poetry hasn't always been considered fleeting rainbows, spontaneous overflow of emotion . . . but we live in a specialized age, so poetic language has to be *different.* My notion of the distinction between poetry and prose is that poetry is simply language in lines as well as sentences, whereas prose is language in sentences.

Now, why do I write in poetry, not prose? The advantage I have in writing poetry is that the presence of the line allows a more careful and complete rendering of an experience than I could otherwise get. The line controls and defines effects of rhythm, of meter. Through rhythm I suggest not only action, what people did, but the accompanying quality of what people feel and think.

RM: Better give an example.

AS: Let's take a look at this poem, in which Captain Wynne, who is the official responsible for dealing with the British and making requests for food, describes one particular peasant family.

> As I approached I realized the father
> was the only one alive, for he was moaning
> low and demonically, and his legs twitched—
> though not enough to move, or move the
> others
> who leant upon him still, as if in death
> they still cried for the help he could not
> give.

This is iambic pentameter blank verse, and the virtue of the regularity in that rhythm is the variations that the regularity makes perceptible *as variations.*[1] If there's no particular form then whatever rhythmical changes you try to work into a poem aren't going to be perceptible—there's nothing to change from. So what I do in this context,

> he was moaning
> low and demonically,

is what you call in the trade a reversed foot in the first position: [lów and] [demón] [ically.] Instead of an iamb (light stress, heavy stress), I reverse the foot and have heavy stress, light stress, which emphasizes both the low quality of the moaning and also the importance of that detail as it would register on the sensibility of the speaker. So I'm really just describing a particular story, but with the heightened control meter provides I can imply all sorts of things about the speaker, all kinds of things about the way he's feeling even as he pretends to be merely reporting.

RM: Do you think about meter as you write?

AS: Yes and no. I didn't sit down and think "I could reverse the following foot," but I do believe that those moods and effects are not accidental. They're the result of intense concentration. You meditate on the subject so thoroughly that every single element contributes to the overall description. There's a poem by Theodore Roethke called "The Heron," a very simple poem describing a bird in the water. All of it is in iambic pentameter. There aren't even substitutions, reversed feet, and yet by varying the *degrees* of stresses within these repeated iambic feet, he can say a great many things about the bird he's describing:

> He jerks a frog across his bony lip,
> Then points his heavy bill above the wood.
> The wide wings flap but once to lift him up.
> A single ripple starts from where he stood.

"The wide wings flap"—he slows the rhythm to suggest that graceful movement.

RM: I would suspect that when most people read a poem they're not hearing much of this.

AS: No.

RM: How can you learn to?

AS: That's what I teach when I teach writing: I teach people how to attend to the subtleties of rhythm. You can learn—it's not a special gift.

RM: I know about your connection with Stanford, and here we've had a discussion that first emphasizes fundamental matters of history and morality, then subtle points of craftsmanship. I can't help but feel that the ghost of Yvor Winters is looming somewhere near us.

AS: Only because we both share a formal interest. But form is supple: that's why the traditional forms have been around so long. They can accommodate such a wide range of personalities and sensibilities. Winters *is* someone I'm really interested in. One of the great dangers he was prompted by in his own poetry was purity: the single-minded pursuit of one thing to the exclusion of all else. Poetry that exists in a world of its own, unconcerned with the world around it. The pure lust for power. The pursuit of pure engineering excellence. I think in his concern to broaden the base of poetry, to bring it from the margins of experience to the center—that is, to ordinary life—I am absolutely indebted to him.

RM: Who's writing right now that you admire?

AS: J. V. Cunningham. Elizabeth Bishop—she died recently. Robert Pinsky, a young poet in his thirties. Kenneth Fields at Stanford. Eleanor Lerman, a terrific poet. Seamus Heaney, the best poet in Ireland since Yeats.

RM: In a way, what you're doing seems more in tune with what's going on in England and Ireland right now.

AS: I've lived in both places. Living in Ireland was formative in all kinds of ways. I went to Ireland because of my interest in Heaney. After I graduated, I got a grant from Brandeis to go to Ireland and write for a year, and I went primarily to get to know him and be influenced

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Alan Shapiro *held a Sachar International Scholarship at Brandeis and a Stegner Fellowship at Stanford, where he was Jones Lecturer in Poetry in 1978. He now teaches at Northwestern University. Shapiro visited Valparaiso University for the Spring 1980 Wordfest, at which time this interview was taped. The poems of Shapiro's quoted in the interview may be read in full in* Poetry, *September 1979. Shapiro has also been published recently in* The Southern Review *(Spring 1980). His first book,* Common Dangers, *will be published this year by Carcanet Press, Manchester, England.*

[1] An iamb is a two-syllable foot, consisting of one unstressed followed by one stressed foot. Iambic pentameter, the line of *Paradise Lost* and *Hamlet,* consists of five iambs.

by the things he was influenced by. I never met him while I was there. The interesting thing is, I had a sense of myself that I never had in America. Our country is so large, so formless, we think we have no real cultural tradition to draw on. But we do.

In Ireland I was made very uncomfortable by the close-knit sense of community—something I started out looking for—and the life there began to feel repressive. Everybody knew everyone else. You couldn't avoid people. I'm so used to anonymity, I started feeling homesick for homelessness. I realized that an important part of American experience is being rootless—and that becomes a home in a way. America and American literature have been devoted to the difficulties of the single, solitary self, and there are positive elements of that and negative. The need for community is generally frustrated, but then there's a community of single, solitary selves, and I feel a part of that tradition.

RM: Is there an audience for those single, solitary selves who happen to write poetry?

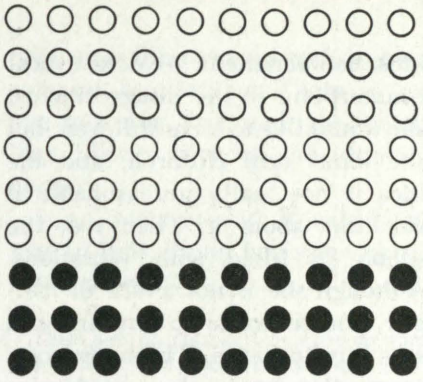
AS: The national scene is so huge. You come across poets in their mid-forties who have published several books—good poets—and you've never heard of them. Sometimes it seems that there are more people writing poetry than reading it. These students I met with today—most of them have never read a poem on their own. Outside of a class? They'd never think of it. And yet they consider themselves seriously involved in writing poetry. The *Yale Younger Poets* series each year has more submissions than buyers. That's astonishing. I think if you submit poems to magazines, you should be forced to take a subscription.

RM: Have you done that with *Poetry?*

AS: Yes. Eighteen bucks a year comes hard for a poet. Poetry isn't exactly the foundation of our economy.

RM: It never will be. But I think you have shown that is beside the point.

Theatre



The Witness Of Silence

The Testimony Of *Children of a Lesser God* and *The Caretaker*

Nelvin Vos

In the beginning was silence, and out of it could come only one thing—human speech.

So opens *Children of a Lesser God,* a new drama by Mark Medoff, now playing on Broadway, but which had its first performance in Los Angeles at the Mark Taper Forum, one of our finest regional theatres.

The speaker, a therapist played by John Rubinstein (yes, Arthur's son, more of that later), who steps forward to address the audience about his work to aid the deaf in his clinic. And for the next several hours, the stage portrays a multiplicity of dramas: a conflict of words against silence, the silence within a person, the silence between persons. The play is about the deaf, those who cannot hear but also those who will not hear, and about the mute, those who cannot speak, but also those who will not speak. Words and silence do battle, and in the end, there is only silence.

Words and silence battle, and the end is silence.

Although the plot is simple enough—boy meets girl, boy marries girl, girl leaves boy, and they come back together—the journey of the two is not. For the girl is deaf and mute. Rubinstein as speech therapist falls in love with one of his patients who was born deaf. The girl, Phyliss Frelich (who is deaf, but not mute, and one of the founders of the National Theater of the Deaf), gradually returns his passion. She is reluctant to open herself, for she has spent her twenty-six years avoiding the society of "hearers."

But the play is neither clinical nor sentimental; it is warmly personal and credible. Both performers are extraordinary: Miss Frelich who uses no words at all, but conveys in sign language her deepest joys and pain; and Mr. Rubinstein who not only signs the language he himself speaks (remember, she is actually deaf), but also says her lines aloud as she signs them to him. He not only acts but reacts and interprets all at once, "his hands dancing in the air like dragonflies," wrote one reviewer. In a *New York Times* interview, Rubinstein confided that his nimble fingers, busy at the piano since four years of age, helped him to learn the part in a month. The result is a tour de force of theatre.

The growing relationship between the two, poignantly portrayed, leads to marriage at the end of the first act. But certain warnings have been posted. When he invites her out to lunch, for example, their relationship of love strengthens, but the chasm persists. Unaccustomed to such a setting, she must ask what a "piccato" is (I too did not know). Mr. Rubinstein desperately moves his fingers; the result, as he realizes, is "cowbaby sauteed in butter." Once the food is served, he is disturbed by the disappearance of all conversa-

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Nelvin Vos *is a graduate of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and Head of the English Department at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania. His most recent book is* The Great Pendulum of Becoming (*Eerdmanns*), *a study of several major modern dramatists.*

When no word is spoken and when true silence falls, we are nearer to our nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to see it as a stratagem to cover our nakedness.

tion. She patiently explains to him that it is difficult to talk when her hands are busy.

Later, as the two approach the act of sexual love for the first time, he automatically reaches to turn off the light. She protests, quickly. Puzzled, he asks why. "So we can talk," she answers simply.

The response touches us and makes us laugh at the same time. We too have forgotten. Mr. Rubinstein has convinced us as well as himself that he speaks for her. We think we have been hearing her, but she has been silent. We have only heard her through Mr. Rubinstein. Their conversations, the graceful and dynamic flutter of the hands, have been at best one-sided. We are suddenly again aware that he is silent to her, and that he and we can only know her mind and heart through gestures.

For her silence is both mandatory and at the same time possibly self-determined. Her deafness is total and irremediable. But can she speak? Is she simply refusing to? He attempts to break her silence with his pleading hands, then angry words, but she is silent. He continues to search for ways to penetrate the shell which is both refuge and escape.

But she is filled with a terror of being considered retarded. She fears that any sounds she makes will sound strange, for she is aware that she has no way of comparing them with other people's. Since the time her mother treated her as a mentally handicapped child, she has decided that the safety of silence is the best strategy. Anger, pride, and bitterness fill her defiant isolation. Why should she learn the language of talkers when talkers will not bother to learn hers? And she has found meaning in her lonely world: "Deafness is not the opposite of hearing; it's a silence full of sounds."

"A silence full of sounds"—that is the core of the play. We hear tonalities in the quick-witted flow of ideas between them. We detect vocal counterpoint in the disagreements: she would like to have children, but she wants deaf children, and the idea is not really unreasonable if we think about it. Then too, the silence is filled with vibrations. Although she is not aware of melody, she responds to rhythm and asks him to dance. The body communicates when spoken words cannot do so.

By the end of the play, our pity for her has transformed itself into joining him in the futile attempt to break the silence between them. "I'll help you if you'll help me," is the play's inconclusive but longing cry. The two arrive at the awareness that in silence all of us have not only solitude but also intimacy and communion.

II

Life is much more mysterious than plays make it out to be. And it is this mystery which fascinates me; what happens between the words, what happens when no words are spoken at all.

—Harold Pinter, interview, 1966.

The dramatic art of Harold Pinter, one of Britain's leading playwrights for the past several decades, nurtures silence with careful deliberation. A recent production of his 1960 play, *The Caretaker,* revived by the repertory company of the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival at Drew University, reminded me and my Contemporary Drama Students that the pauses between words can effectively convey the silence between and within persons.

The West London room in which the entire play takes place looks like the Pharaoh's tomb of a junkman. Bales of yellowed newspapers, moldy tennis rackets, scattered bureau drawers, a sink bowl, and a disconnected gas stove are incongruously graced with a red gilt plaster Buddha. There is a lawnmower and a step ladder directly in the center of the room. On a rope strung from the leaky roof hangs a bucket into which drops of water plunk at particular intervals like the tick-tock of doom.

In this chilly, dusty tomb, three mummies of modern men proceed to strip off each other's wrappings with bursts of humor, glints of malice, and a passionate alternating current of regard and disregard for their common humanity.

The room is the property of two brothers: Aston and Mick. Aston, the elder, has been in a mental institution, and between long silences, constructs his thoughts with the careful intensity of a child building a tower of blocks. The younger, Mick, is a blunt businessman who wields his power through his torrents of staccato verbiage.

In the play's opening, the elder brother in a gesture of Samaritanism, invites an old tramp to share the room. Davies is the smelliest, itchiest bum one can imagine, almost animalic in appearance and character. He is a homeless canine, by turns howling, barking, and wagging his tail. Wily, he plays the brothers against each other. When he is offered the job of caretaker of the place first by the older brother, he hesitates. But when Mick later offers him the same position, he quickly decides to cast in his lot with such strong bravado. The tramp then turns on the older brother by exposing all his weaknesses, and having bitten the hand that is feeding him, the two brothers both reject him and he is cast out once more.

Psychologically, each of the characters is paralyzed by failures of will and nerve, and the junk-cluttered room reflects that impasse. None of the three can save himself, but none is ready to take care of another in this selfish and rootless world. Each member of this desperate trio needs the others, but their tragedy is to deny their mutual need and to fall apart in silence.

Christianity frequently bills itself as a religion of the Word as verbal discourse. Does that stance illustrate some compulsion to possess religion by enclosing it?

The comic and the grotesque and the tragic are all intertwined in Pinter's dramaturgy. One laughs at the helplessness, the vaudeville stage business, and the elaborately fabricated tales each tells. But underneath the surface lurks nameless anguish and suffering.

And one of the major ways Pinter dramatizes this terror is through the use of silence, the pause between speeches. A quick count of *The Caretaker* gave stage directions for *Silence* some fifteen times and *Pause* over 150 times. Such a count does not convey the power of such silence on stage, the articulate energy which gives resonance to the drama. For between the spoken and the unheard lies the mystery of human confrontation.

The pause in Pinter's play may be a mask of hiding, a preoccupation with judging, a time for refining before shifting the subject. The visceral process of decision is left open for the audience. The pause may heighten the previous words so that they echo once more; or the pause may suspend us to listen more attentively to the next words. Shock, innuendo, the timing of the comic quip—all these the deliberate tempo of silence accentuates within the drama.

By allowing the dynamics of silence to exist on stage, Pinter's plays create a special relationship to the audience, similar to the effect of spectators entering a room of minimal sculpture. The viewer is forced to fill in the spaces. The opaque, haunting specificity of Pinter's dramas reduces experience to textures and tones so spare that everything else is left to the viewer's response. Each word spoken reflects the glacial silence beneath and around it.

Thus the silence is an active force, a breathtaking artistic choice which allows audience and actor to forgo systematic meaning for total immersion in the living and unpredictable present. In these moments, consciousness fills the void with its own complex associations. There is not one meaning, but multiple meanings. Silence becomes the ultimate mystery.

In an interview with Ronald Hayman in 1968, Pinter had some words about silence:

> There are two silences. One when no word is spoken. The other when perhaps a torrent of language is employed. This speech is speaking a language locked beneath it. That is its continual reference. The speech we hear is an indication of that we don't hear. It is a necessary avoidance, a violent, sly, anguished or mocking smokescreen which keeps the other in its place. When true silence falls we are still left with echo but are nearer nakedness. One way of looking at speech is to say it is a constant stratagem to cover nakedness.

Pinter's observations about silence imply an intuition of the primal silence as man left Eden and longed to cloak himself and cover his vulnerability. And since that moment, words both cover and uncover. For the word both conceals and reveals.

III

In the beginning was the Word . . .

It is appropriate, writes George Steiner, that the Apostle should have used the Greek language to express the Hellenistic conception of the *Logos.* Both the Classical and Biblical worlds attempted to order reality within the governance of words, of language. Theology, philosophy, literature, law all seek to enclose within verbal discourse the sum of human experience, its recorded past, its present condition, and its future expectations. "We live," comments Steiner, "inside the all of discourse."

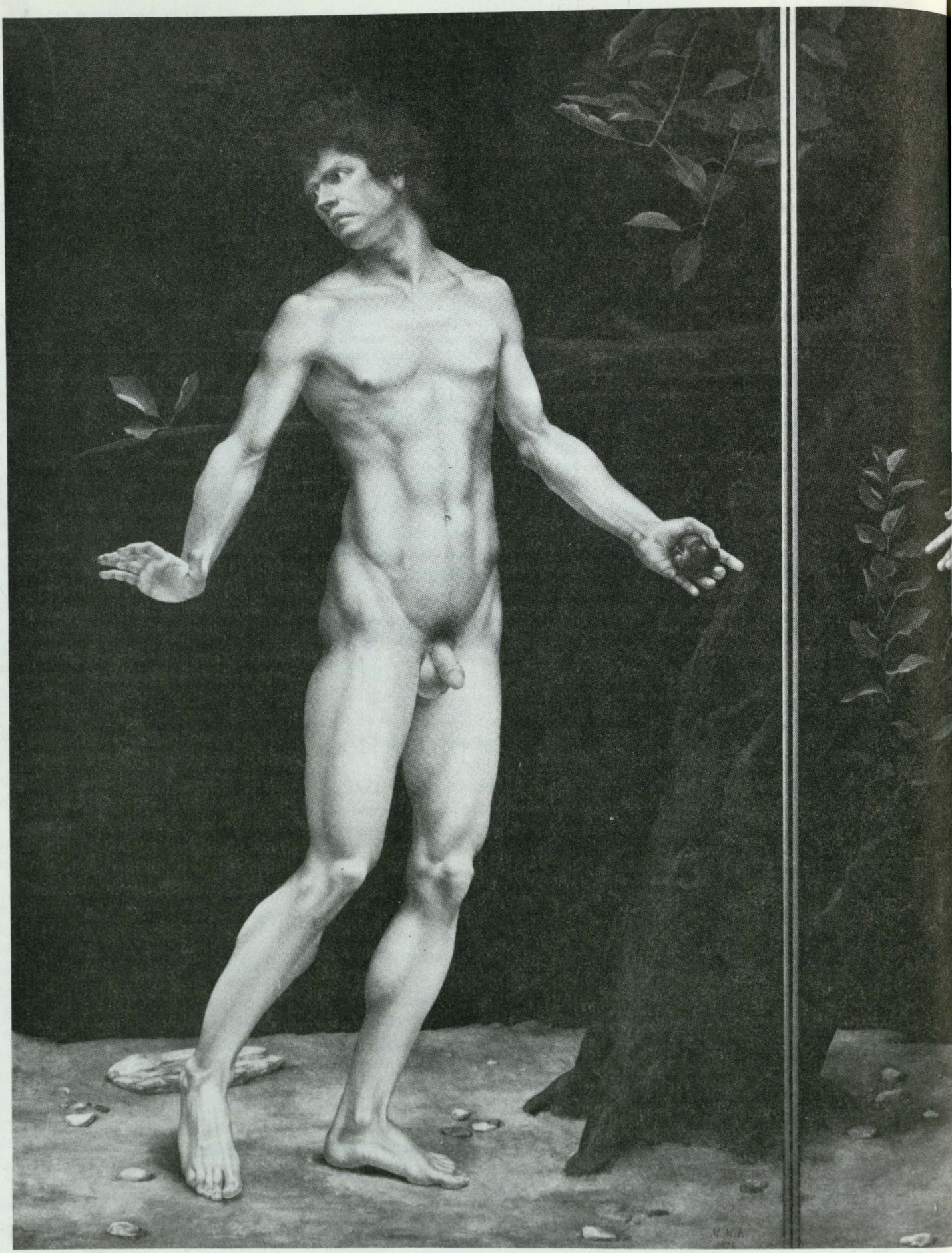
But the Word is more than verbal discourse. The *Logos* is none other than the incarnation of God Himself, the Word dramatized in human flesh, Jesus Christ.

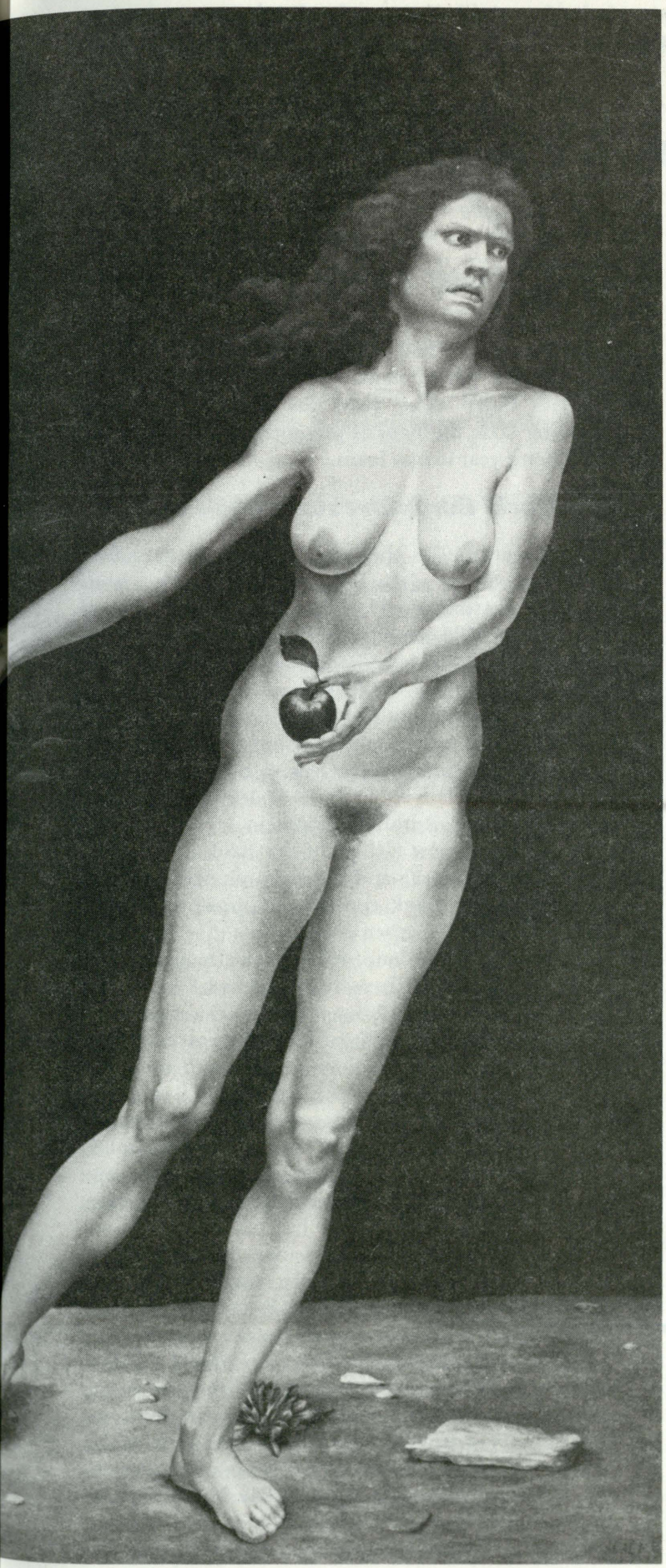
And yet, Christianity, and particularly some forms of Protestantism, bills itself so frequently as a religion of the Word, of verbal discourse. Does such a stance illustrate some compulsive need to possess religion by enclosing it? Why do we find it so difficult to accept it, to dance it, to exult in it? The drama of Christianity lives not only in the words of the Word, but also in highly dramatic acts of being cleansed with water and being nourished by bread and wine. Most of all, the center of Christianity is a drama: the actions of Jesus Christ to live, to die, to rise, and to live again.

In worship, we participate in a drama with God and with one another. And we fill it with words and more words. Why is it that many of us fear the pause, the silence, within worship? We are often embarrassed by it, we fidget and twist in our too-tight mental underwear because we have never learned to see silence other than nothingness. We live with a fear of gaps.

But we need to be aware that, as John Killinger suggests, "silences are the cracks in the dome of eternity, whence wisdom can seep through." We need silence in the drama of the liturgy—silence to listen to God, silence to hear the neighbor, silence to hear our own breathing. What would it do for a scripture passage to be surrounded by a pool of silence before and after its reading? Dare we consider what would happen to our sensibilities to proceed through an entire service with only pantomime and gesture? Or, more modestly, what would it mean to a prayer to be quiet for thirty seconds between each petition? Still more modestly, what would happen if worship leaders paid attention to the rubrics for silence and reflection within the present liturgies?

Ironically, the contemporary theatre has perhaps listened more carefully than the Church to the words of the prophet Zechariah, "Be silent all flesh," and to the Psalmist's injunction, "Be still . . ."





Valparaiso University Art Collections

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Richard H. W. Brauer

The growing "post-modern" acceptance of picturing to express literary and poetic themes is reflected in the three works reproduced in this issue of the *Cresset.*

The Joseph Cornell collages, given to the Valparaiso University Art Collections by his sister, Betty C. Benton, consist of disparate pictorial fragments clipped from reproductions in mass printing and combined into unexpected pictorial harmonies. *Birds, Nests with Eggs, and Madonnas* (cover) are images of new birth and the powers of renewal and innocence (with the recovery of innocence suggested perhaps in the oblique references to the Christ child). On the other hand, the *Wine Glass* collage (inside cover) offers a convincing glimpse of a world already purified. The mysteriously secure (and redemptive?) wine glass and the all pervasive sky sparkle with life.

Instead of searching for signs of paradise regained, Martha Mayer Erlebacher's oil painting *Adam and Eve* explores the theme of paradise lost. In this work she engages in a conscious pursuit of the meaning of The Fall by plotting narrative elements (even historic stylistic references) to achieve an image expressive of the superhuman force of evil.

Martha Mayer Erlebacher (b. 1937). *Adam and Eve,* 1974-1975. Oil on canvas. Each panel of the painting is 64 x 40". Valparaiso University Art Collections. 1980 Sloan Fund Purchase.

Richard H. W. Brauer *is Director of the Valparaiso University Art Galleries and Collections.*

There are 800 million people in the world who are absolutely poor, who lack the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, education, and health.

Justice for the Poor in Third World Cities

The Rich Get Richer a Lot Faster than the Poor Get Richer

David M. Beckmann

With the exception of the threat of nuclear war, the most serious ethical issue facing this generation is world poverty. Since my work at the World Bank principally concerns urban poverty, this article specifically addresses (1) the problems of urban poverty in developing countries, (2) some approaches the World Bank is using to improve the situation of the urban poor, and (3) several lessons I have learned in my work at the World Bank which may be of special interest to Christians. The views expressed in this article are, of course, my own and not necessarily those of the World Bank.

I

By way of introduction, let me explain what the World Bank is and how it functions. The World Bank is an agency within the United Nations system which makes long-term loans to the governments of developing countries. The Bank's shareholders are its 134 member governments. Most of the money the Bank lends, about 70 per cent, is borrowed in private capital markets (from banks, insurance companies, and the like) and lent on near-commercial terms to middle-income countries. The main contribution the governments of the rich countries make to these international banking operations is to guarantee the debts of the Bank in case it should ever be unable to honor its commitments. That is unlikely, since the Bank has accumulated sizeable reserves, and since no borrowing country has yet defaulted on a World Bank loan. The other 30 per cent of the money the Bank lends comes from a special fund called IDA (International Development Association), which makes it possible to lend at low interest rates and longer terms to low-income countries like Bangladesh and Chad. To replenish IDA, the Bank turns to the governments of the world's wealthier countries every three years for new contributions. Including IDA, the Bank is presently committing over $10 billion a year in new loans.

The World Bank Invests in the Poor

In the early 1970s there was a general realization that the prosperity of the last generation had not been equitably distributed. The world's economic growth from 1950 to 1975 was unprecedented, and most poor people in the world benefited somewhat from that expansion. But, on the whole, the rich got richer a lot faster than the poor got richer. Starting in about 1973, the World Bank, among other institutions, began trying to change its investment patterns so that poor people would benefit from its projects at least as much as better-off people. Rural development became a high priority, and by now a third of the Bank's lending is directed toward rural and agricultural development. My work at the Bank concerns its present parallel effort to invest in the urban poor.

There are on the order of 800 million absolutely poor people in the world. These are people who lack basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, education, and health. Approximately 200 million of these poor live in cities. The cities of developing countries have tripled in population over the last twenty-five years, partly because of economic policies biased against rural development (low food prices, for example), but partly, too, because of expanding economic opportunities in the cities. Economic growth as we have known it for the last 200 years has generally been associated with urbanization, because the industrialization of an economy is done more efficiently in cities. If present trends continue, most of the absolutely poor people in the world by the year 2000 will live in cities.

In evaluating urban projects for the World Bank, I have personally estimated the extent of the poverty in a number of cities in East Africa and Latin America. In the towns of Botswana roughly 40 per cent of the families probably cannot afford a calorie-adequate diet. In Tanzania the figure was nearly 50 per cent; in Addis Ababa, Ethopia, a grim 65 per cent. Even in Guayaquil, Ecuador, booming and relatively prosper-

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David M. Beckmann *is both a Lutheran pastor and an economist at the World Bank, Washington, D.C. After graduating from Yale University, he studied theology at Christ Seminary-Seminex and economics at the London School of Economics. He has lived and worked in Bangladesh and Ghana and has traveled in nearly sixty countries. He is the author of* The Overseas List: Opportunities for Living and Working in Developing Countries (*Augsburg, 1979*) *and* Eden Revival: Spiritual Churches in Ghana (*Concordia, 1975*). *This article is adapted from the third annual O.P. Kretzmann Memorial Lecture in Christian Ethics which Pastor Beckmann delivered at Valparaiso University.*

The cities of developing countries have tripled in population in the past 25 years, and most of the absolutely poor in the world may live in cities by the year 2000.

ous, we estimate that 37 per cent of the families are unable to afford a calorie-adequate diet. These estimates ignore all considerations of diet quality (protein, for example). They are based on the starchy diet poor people eat and the percentage of their income, usually about 60 per cent, that poor people spend on food. Few of these underfed poor are obviously dying of hunger, but their babies are born small, many of their children die (of diseases complicated by underfeeding and malnourishment), and of those who survive some never achieve their genetic potential either physically or mentally.

The Poor Do Most to Help the Poor

How have public authorities in the developing countries coped with the swelling number of low-income people in their cities? On the whole, not very well. Systems of water supply, sewerage, garbage collection, and housing construction have not kept up, and poor people have difficulty even buying land in most cities. In some countries of Africa poor people were formally excluded from the cities during colonial days. Formal exclusion from the cities has been carried to extremes in South Africa; most of the black Africans who work in Johannesburg, for example, are forced to live in Soweto, twelve miles away. But colonial patterns have not yet been completely broken in countries like Zambia or Burundi either, and city building regulations still confine most of the population to substandard neighborhoods on the fringes of the cities.

Even in Latin America, where most countries have been independent since the early nineteenth century, it is still often virtually illegal to be poor in the city. Antiquated and sometimes corrupt land titling offices just don't work for the poor, and building regulations often put legal housing out of the price range of 50-70 per cent of the city's population. Whatever public housing is built is usually far too expensive for the poor and not nearly enough in comparison to the exploding need for urban shelter.

Illegal settlements often result. Most of the urban poor in developing countries are, as they say in Spanish, "marginal" to the cities they live in. They settle illegally in barely habitable spots (ravines, steep hills, or swamps) which no one else wants to develop, and they are crowded together in precarious and unsanitary situations. Sometimes the settlements of the poor get bulldozed. More often, they survive through benign neglect. When well-meaning politicians do try to help their solutions are usually short-term and paternalistic. For example, a mayor may decree that poor neighborhoods will henceforth get drinking water free, but such a policy will nearly bankrupt any water company before long. Rich people will manage to get service anyway; they can use their political influence. But, due to financial constraints, water pipes may never reach many new low-income *barrios.*

II

Most of what is being done to improve the situations of the urban poor is being done by the poor themselves. They are the ones who find better jobs for themselves, even at the cost of moving to the city. They provide most of their own shelter, and families which begin with shacks usually build them up into more permanent homes over time.

When the World Bank's management was considering what we might do to help, it was clear we had to be modest in what we thought we could accomplish. Maybe we could assist public authorities in developing countries to be more supportive of what poor people are doing for themselves—upgrading slums rather than bulldozing them, providing new areas where poor families could build their homes legally, and supporting the small-scale enterprises which are often found in low-income neighborhoods.

It was decided that whatever projects the Bank would finance should be *replicable.* Almost the entire $10 billion the Bank commits each year could be used just to pay for the provision of basic shelter for the poor. Thus, our projects aim to establish methods for meeting the needs of the poor which can be used over and over again, with domestic resources, as cities expand. The idea is not to provide assistance to a few thousand families, but to institute systems of urban government which are more responsive to the poor.

This approach implies *appropriate technology* and *cost recovery.* The initial investment focuses increased attention on the needs of the poor. But the services provided should be tailored to what poor people can afford, assuming that the government can allow them to pay for the investment over a fifteen to twenty year period. If the authorities eventually recover most of the investment, they can repeat the process indefinitely. Some subsidy is appropriate. Maybe schools and health centers, for example, can be built and staffed free of charge for the poor. There should be a realistic assessment of how much subsidy is feasible on a sustained basis, however, so that the solutions developed can be extended to the entire poverty population.

If most costs are to be recovered over time, the technologies used must be affordable, and there must be realistic standards for upgrading slums and providing new areas where the poor can settle legally. In nearly all countries, governments can economize by leaving

to the people themselves what the people can do. Public authorities should concentrate on providing *public* services—agile land titling systems, for example, or the basic infrastructure for water supply—rather than divert scarce administrative resources to tasks, like house construction, which people can manage for themselves.

Beyond that basic principle of leaving to the people what they can do for themselves, what is appropriate for the government to do varies from country to country. Many new arrivals to the towns of very poor countries, like Tanzania and Ethiopia, can afford no more than a surveyed lot, serviced only by dirt-track roads and a few water standpipes. But at least their settlements can be planned, so that, as their incomes increase over the years, better and cheaper services can be provided than would be possible had the original settlements been haphazard. In most of Latin America, the great majority of "marginal" families can afford small lots with individual connections for water, sewerage, and electricity. The streets may be gravel and some families may have to be left without sewerage connections, but the initial infrastructure should be designed to be upgradeable as incomes increase over time. The sewerage pipes, for example, should be big enough to accommodate all the families likely to connect into the system within twenty or thirty years.

The World Bank is using the same approach—appropriate technology and cost recovery—to design loan programs aimed to reach very small businesses, like cobblers, tailors, and carpenters. We search for appropriate administrative arrangements for making loans (for example, the use of part-time students, rather than professional employees, to screen applications). For the sake of cost recovery and replicability, we press for higher interest rates on the loans. Small businesses in Third World cities usually rely on informal sources of credit which may charge 10 per cent interest *per month.* Commercial banks will not lend to small businesses, partly because governmental regulations usually do not allow the banks to charge a rate of interest (perhaps 6-7 per cent above the rate of inflation) sufficient to cover the extra administrative expenses of making small loans. Higher interest rates may not be popular, but full cost recovery is a key to opening up the banking system to the poor.

III

As I said at the outset, world poverty is, except for the threat of nuclear war, the most serious ethical issue facing this generation. I conclude with several lessons I have learned from my work on projects of the World Bank, which may be of special interest to Christian readers.

First, these projects provide a striking example for the distinction between law and Gospel. World Bank urban projects are, I think, instruments for justice. But justice, I've learned, has hard edges. When poor *barrios* are offered the possibility of participating in one of these projects, it does not come as unadulterated good news. They may press to have all the improvements made *gratis.* Yet, even if government is more responsive to the poor, it must still be government. It must continue to tax, command, and enforce limits.

We Help the Poor Gain their own Voice

Justice may be an imperfect reflection of the Gospel, but it is not, as is our experience of God in Jesus Christ, gracious. I once turned to the vision of the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation while I was looking for a Bible quotation about cities to post on my office wall. As I read it, I was suprised that the features of the city John praised in his vision of the New Jerusalem would disqualify it as a World Bank project:

"I will give from the fountain of the water of life without payment."	*Unrealistic financial system.*
"The street of the city was pure gold . . ."	*We insist on affordable standards.*
"But nothing unclean shall enter it . . ."	*The garbage problem cannot be solved by legislating against it.*
"It had a great high wall with twelve gates."	*Monumental, inappropriate building technology.*

John knew first-hand the filth and squalor of first-century cities, and he envisioned a city with all those features fantastically reversed. It was an image of this old world transformed into a gracious, new world. But in the old world as it is, we cannot organize a city on grace.

Second, I have been reminded of the churches' special role in relation to world poverty. Because only the churches proclaim the Gospel, we should be sure that the churches carry out this function no other institution will perform. I am not suggesting the churches just preach to the poor; the Gospel itself will not allow that. We are moved by the Gospel to acts of mercy and to participation in the struggle for justice. But the churches should use their very limited resources in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed by everything they do. The Gospel can, better than any social program, endow the poor with dignity and hope.

Preaching the Gospel is an imperative of faith. But also, from purely an economist's point of view, I would urge the churches to specialize in the things they do best. The churches need not try to act like banks,

Financial projects to help the urban poor should be replicable and establish methods for meeting their needs which can be used over and over again, with domestic resources, as their cities expand.

governments, or political parties. They do not have the resources to be successful surrogates for secular institutions anyway. But the churches are especially involved in the lives of *people,* in both developed and developing countries, and they can help people, as no bank or government can, to apprehend the meaning and purpose of life.

In the developing countries, churches can be fully *with* poor people in ways that banks or governments never will be. Church charities for the very poor and small-scale development projects meet needs not reached by government programs, and, because they are church-sponsored, such programs can be signs of God's transcendent promises to the poor. It is also appropriate for the churches to help the poor "gain their own voice," to use Paulo Freire's phrase. This does not simply mean mobilizing the poor for a particular campaign as any political party would do. It means educating and organizing the poor to participate more fully and more responsibly in decisions affecting their own interests.

We Aid the Poor through Politics

Economically privileged people also look to the churches for meaning and purpose. The Gospel can inspire them to serve the poor, and a commitment to the Gospel among relatively well-off people in developing countries is one key to improving conditions for the poor. I have observed, for example, that moral commitment is often crucial for the success of agencies which try to implement projects to relieve poverty. The World Bank is more used to evaluating financial accounts and technical competence, but some of the Bank's most successful urban projects in Latin America were those implemented by a church-related foundation in El Salvador. In Bolivia, in a Bank-financed project with which I am working, the slum-upgrading component is functioning well, primarily because the municipal project unit is staffed by committed people. They often work nights and weekends when poor people are at home. They have won the confidence of people, despite years of unfulfilled promises by public officials. And they keep going, despite relatively low salaries and the frustrations implicit in any project which aims to deal with long-standing poverty problems.

In the United States, too, the churches can help Christian people do more to alleviate world poverty. What can we in the United States do about poverty abroad? The answers are not novel. We can give money directly to organizations like Lutheran World Relief. That's important, especially because the churches' own development programs are a way of proclaiming God's promises. But all the U.S. voluntary organizations together spend only about $600 million a year for developing countries. Our private charity is hardly significant when compared, for example, to the $200 billion worth of trade between developed and developing countries each year or the $46 billion worth of foreign investment made in the developing countries each year.

The way to influence those larger economic structures which relate us to the world's poor is through politics. One organization going in the right direction is Bread for the World, a Christian citizens' lobby which organizes people by congressional district to advocate specific legislation in the interest of the poor. What we need is a political movement of concern as deep as were the movements for Black people's civil rights and against the Vietnam War during the 1950s and 1960s, but more long-lasting. The evil of world poverty is even more complex and tenacious than is that of racism in the United States.

One obvious political objective for people concerned about poverty abroad is more and better foreign aid. From personal experience, I am convinced that foreign aid often has a positive effect on the problem of world poverty. I know that there are other ways to help the world's poor (relaxing U.S. tariff barriers, for example, might result in greater benefits to people in developing countries). And I am sure mistakes have been made in the administration of foreign aid. We are already learning from the mistakes we made in the design of the "first generation" of the World Bank's urban projects in 1974 and 1975. But I am confident that the money we have invested has been, on the whole, well-spent and that in many countries it has influenced policy in ways that are beneficial to the urban poor.

I am, therefore, particularly concerned that our government has consistently been slow in meeting its commitments to IDA. This year, in addition, the "Bank" part of the Bank has reached the limit of borrowing and lending that was set for it at the end of the Second World War. The Bank's member governments have agreed to double this limit in order to allow for another generation of growth, but the U.S. Congress has put off approving the increase in our government's guarantee. I hope we do not consider foreign aid expendable as we struggle to control inflation. In any case, what the "Bank" part of the Bank needs is primarily the government's guarantee, not funds to spend. The only other member countries which have yet to sign up are Iran, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Fiji.

The third lesson I have learned at the World Bank is that we can do something about world poverty. That lesson is perhaps the most important one, ethically and religiously, I have to share with Christian readers. It is a lesson we dare not ignore.

The University and the World Mission of the Church

Five Directions For the Avocational Ministries of the Laity

Robert Schmidt

What is the role of the Christian university in the world mission of the church? There was a time when Christian colleges and campus ministries were hotbeds of missionary fervor. The international Christian mission emphasis still fires dreams and draws crowds among the evangelistically oriented students. However, among those Christian universities and campus ministries where secular learning is respected, the world mission of the church has become problematic.

The scope of the mission has changed. Educated church people are not only concerned about harvesting souls in India, they are also worried about Indians begging in the streets and dying from malnutrition. Not only is reconciliation important between God and men, it is also vital to the racial conflict in South Africa. The mission has steadily grown from preaching Christ in a thatched roofed village to being also a little Christ in feeding Cambodians, counseling alcoholics, and serving as a precinct committee woman.

At the same time the mission has expanded, resources to carry out the mission are getting smaller. The cost of a single foreign missionary has steeply risen as the buying power of the dollar has shrunk. It is harder to attract Americans for long term missionary service overseas than before. Difficulties in cross-cultural communication, anti-Americanism, and a lack of clarity in the missionary purpose have taken their toll. Even special world mission fund raising drives have not resulted in significant missionary staff increases overseas.

Further complicating the mission is our growing awareness of the internationalization of the world community. While few mission churches have been planted in the Islamic Middle East, Arabs and Iranians are attending our universities by the thousands. American personnel of multi-national companies live in almost every nation of the world. A bonanza in international travel has planted Hiltons where once only pith helmeted missionaries dared to walk. Before we send a dedicated physician to India to work in a mission hospital, we are likely to inquire why there are so many Indian and Pakistani physicians in United States hospitals. The world mission is at our doorstep.

How will the church respond to the crises and opportunities of the world mission? The future of the church's ministry in higher education to a great extent depends on how the church answers the question. One alternative is for the church again to narrow the scope of mission. It can define again the mission as the proclamation of forgiveness in Christ. Having set that priority, educational, medical, and community development concerns are relegated to the periphery. They will still be nice to have but much less important than evangelism and church planting. Narrowing the scope of the Christian mission will have an impact on the Christian university. To justify its existence, ministry in higher education will need to demonstrate souls won for Christ or suffer the loss of moral and financial support.

Another alternative is to continue to broaden the scope of mission to include everything Christians do to the glory of God. With this perspective the Christian university can point to every one of its programs and demonstrate how it relates to the "world mission" of the church. Secular schools, of course, can do the same. If everything is defined as the Christian mission, nothing is the Christian mission. Not only are there few priorities, but there is also no essential purpose for belonging to the church except for mutual encouragement. When everything is defined as mission, graduates of church colleges and campus ministries often simply leave the church in its parish form and get involved in the world's tasks. When supporting churches see ministry in higher education as an open door leading students out of the church, support for a Christian ministry in higher education will also wane.

A third alternative is to define the mission of the church as the calling and training of lay ministers. Such laity are the "people" of God,[1] not just the uninformed or uneducated. Biblically, this comes under the language of "making disciples." Disciples, however, are not only souls saved, but people called and educated for ministry. A wider scope for the mission can be retained as some are trained for ministry in the church

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[1] Hendrik Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958).

The Christian university today is already engaged in the world mission of the church. However, for its own sense of purpose, it needs to make this involvement more explicit.

and others for ministry in the world. In a time of diminishing resources for mission, it makes good economic sense to pay one person to equip twelve who will work for little or nothing in their avocation. To meet the challenge of the new internationalism, lay people can be helped to begin ministries wherever they go. Others can be aided to host the foreign visitor and be a friend to one who feels lonely and alienated.

When the world mission of the church is defined as the equipment of lay ministers, the ministry in higher education becomes pivotal. Where else are there the time and resources to alert students to world hurts, and at the same time equip them with theology integrated with secular disciplines? Where else is there the opportunity to nurture on a day-to-day basis the disciple of Christ? Christian colleges and campus ministries long have seen vocational guidance and education as part of their responsibility. However, more is both necessary and possible. Instead of merely helping students focus on a vocation, they should be prepared to aid students in finding an avocation and a mission in life as a lay minister.

The World Mission at Our Doorstep

In church literature of the past twenty years it is difficult to find anyone who is not for more lay ministry. Indeed, every pastor prays for a more active laity. However, in nearly every case lay people are wanted to fill support roles in the local parish. While these have their place, much more is needed in a torn, bleeding, imprisoned, and oppressed world. The church can commission the ministry in higher education to prepare the students for five new types of lay ministry.

The first is a ministry of Word *and* Sacrament. In New Testament time it was possible for every baptized Christian to move to another town and begin a small church fellowship with a ministry of Word and Sacrament.[2] Christians traveling in clergy-short areas can be instructed on how to begin a small church and leave it with a viable leadership and worship life. Indeed most of the education needed would be an un-learning of previously acquired restrictions on the nature of the church and her ministry. House church liturgies and instructional programs are readily available. This may be just the ministry for the forester, agricultural expert, or visiting professor.

A second ministry might be that of a peer counselor. William Diehl refers to this as the ministry of the AID man.[3] In war the AID man was equipped with life preserving skills until the casualties could be gotten back to professional medical help. He calls for a ministry of peer counselors, who at the time of death, divorce, loneliness, or acute anxiety can give emotional first aid until professional help is available. Integrated with studies in theology, psychology, and sociology, a course might be offered in peer counseling. This would alert students to an avocation in helping people who are hurting.

A third direction lies in a ministry of community development. Whether the locale is in rural Nigeria or downtown Detroit, every community has a hierarchy of needs. One trained in community development could have the skills to discover the greatest needs and proceed to mobilize the necessary people to meet those needs. Working in concert with other church people, community leaders and local politicians, leverage might be applied to secure more low cost housing, a free clinic, or a food bank. Education in local government, church history, sociology, and a course in community development could prepare one for a useful task in any area of the world.

Since some communities have all the needs and others all the resources, a fourth lay ministry is required. This is the ministry in world politics. For too long Christian political opinion has been confined to Bible class lessons or church pronouncements few take the time to read. Meanwhile, the political process continues directed largely by selfish interests. Christian lay ministers in politics are needed to wrestle with the issues, decide on a program of action, and carry it out. "Bread For The World" has demonstrated Christian political effectiveness in terms of one major issue. Students could be exposed to other approaches, other issues, and given skills needed in campaigning, lobbying, and peaceful protesting. The faith to move mountains can be integrated with the power to move people, that the prisoners may be released and the poor hear good news.

A fifth avocation might be termed the ministry of communication. In this area of service fit music, the plastic arts, literature, drama, and the various forms of journalism. The Christian-humanist tradition of most church-related colleges and universities already has produced excellence in many of these fields. In some cases little more needs to be done in the arts than to alert participants to the needs and opportunities for ministry. Much more, however, can be done in the journalistic areas. To support ministries in community development and world politics, the churches need good investigative reporting and communication on oppression, corruption, and human need. For such communication, church publications as well as secular media are available to reach a large audience.

[2] Cf. Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?* (London: World Dominion Press, 1956).

[3] William Diehl, *Christianity and Real Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

The threat to the liberal arts does not come from preparing students for Christian service. The threat comes from the bureaucracies of business, the state, and the churches themselves.

Above are five vital directions for Christian lay ministry. They are interesting, exciting, and full of challenges. These are vital ministries in the church, in the community, and in the whole world. Needed are the vehicles whereby laity can be made aware of the opportunities, called to their mission and be equipped for service.

Christian colleges and universities are in an excellent position to equip people for part-time, avocational ministries. Their resources are more than adequate on all fronts. All that might be added are several specific electives in practical theology for lay people and course sequences in related disciplines for a given ministry. Nevertheless, strong resistance can be expected from faculty and administrators embued in the "liberal arts" tradition. From their perspective, religion and theology are not taught as denominational dogma, but as part of the liberal arts education. To these critics, any suggestion of "training lay ministers" brings fears of indoctrination and being identified as a glorified Bible College. They remember that the entire liberal arts tradition had its origin in the protest against superstition and control of the church. For them, the liberal arts have freed minds to inquire, examine, and make considered choices. The critics ask why the university should be used to carry out a task entrusted to the church.

However, the rationale for equipping students for the tasks listed above does not come from the church's control structures. No one denomination can or will benefit. Instead the rationale can be derived directly from the liberal tradition itself. In the last half of the twentieth century our lives are increasingly shaped and controlled by bureaucracies. While bureaucracies of business, government, church, and education supply us with useful work, they also serve to perpetuate many of the inequities of our world. In the employ of any such bureaucracy, it is difficult if not impossible to protest against the self-seeking directions the bureaucracies often take. However, the interested and knowledgeable critic on the outside has the freedom to speak out. Part-time lay ministers are precisely those who have knowledge to help and the room to maneuver outside the corporate structures. Preparation of students for such a critical role in society is worthy of the most "liberal" of the liberal arts tradition. The real threats to the Christian university and the liberal arts tradition do not come from preparing students for service. Instead they come from the control structures of business, church, and state.

The Liberal Arts and Lay Ministry

A major problem for the avocational lay ministry has been what to call it. "Deaconess" and "deacon" have had important Biblical and historical precedents. Since these offices are being revived in other liturgical denominations, they are also important ecumenically. A problem for some Lutherans in using the name has been the "deaconess" program at Valparaiso University, which prepares only women for full-time service. The re-examination of the Deaconess Program at Valparaiso University may provide the occasion and the place to revive a fuller concept of the diaconate. The concept of the diaconate might be precisely the right focus around which a Christian university like Valparaiso might provide for the preparation of lay ministers. If this were done, the concept of the diaconate would be broadened to include both men and women. While still serving to train some full time workers, the greater emphasis could be placed on educating students for part-time service. Preparation for avocational ministry might serve as a "minor" to a student's "major" field.

Once areas of ministry are defined and course sequences outlined, resident instruction can commence. In time, non-resident and continuing education programs might also be initiated. Hopefully, education for the diaconate could be made available not only for undergraduates, but also for adults looking for a new challenge in life. The Christian university is already engaged in the world mission of the church. However, for its continuing support by the church and its own sense of purpose, it needs to make this involvement explicit. This can be done with relative ease and little expense as it mobilizes its resources to equip people for lay ministry. By reviving the concept of the diaconate in its fullness for women and men, full-time and part-time service, Valparaiso University might be the place to begin.

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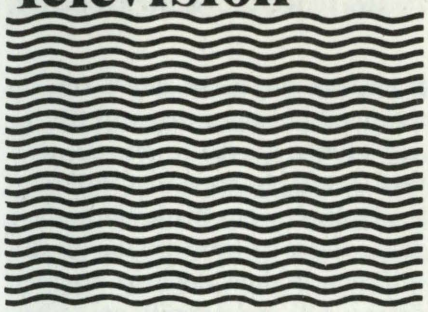

Ronald Reagan And the Collapse Of the Categories

Show Business And Politics in America

James Combs

It is fitting that the nation that pioneered show biz should elect the first show biz president.

Any American over forty has seen his handsome face and heard his sonorous voice a thousand times. He was a slightly less than anonymous presence in a succession of Saturday afternoon movie melodramas and the genial host of *The General Electric Theatre* and *Death Valley Days* on TV during the quiet nights of the Eisenhower era. He may be the consummate product of the mass media, at least three of them. He began his career by "re-creating" the Cubs baseball games on the radio in the 1930s, appeared in sixty-six movies during his decades toiling in Tinseltown, and moved into television as both host and performer (just as many bigger stars, such as Jack Benny and Groucho Marx, did) in the 1950s. He entered politics in the early 1960s at precisely the historical moment when American politics was being transformed by the ubiquity of television, and by then his performance as a politician of The Tube came as second nature to him. And now Ronald Reagan, star of radio, screen, and television, is appearing in a new role: President of the United States of America.

For the analyst of the mass media, the ascendancy of Reagan opens a whole new line of inquiry: the actor as President, the Dream Factory product cast in the leading role in Washington, the B-movie king following in the footsteps of Jefferson, Lincoln, and the Roosevelts. For some it is ludicrous, for others horrifying, but it apparently didn't bother fifty-one per cent of the voters. (Reagan was elected by about a quarter of the adult population of the country.) So it behooves your TV critic to reflect on the claim that Reagan is, as a Sacramento newsman put it, "the quintessential McLuhanesque pol." If that is the case, then understanding the reasons for it and him may give us insight into the show we are in for.

If Reagan represents the collapse of the categories of show biz and politics, then this collapse might give us a clue to the status of the former in American society. For many decades now, Americans have been irresistibly drawn to the fantasy worlds created by show biz. We now consume gargantuan quantities of mass-mediated popular culture—soap operas, sit-coms, news programs (anyone want to argue that news programs are not show biz?), movies, fanzines, disc jockeyed rock radio, country music cassettes, electronic evangelists, and on and on. These worlds and the characters who inhabit these worlds take on a "reality" for us that often our neighborhood and the people who live in it do not have. Television dramas, for example, are attended to for many reasons—overcoming our boredom, escaping our troubles, diverting us with amusement—but not the least of reasons is that television drama offers us a luminous world of consolations and resolutions which are not a part of our everyday world. Show biz has become a multi-billion dollar industry based simply on the power of its created fantasies to transport us into worlds that never were.

It is fitting, then, that the country that pioneered show biz should elect the first show biz President. This event is possibly shocking to Europeans, probably inconceivable to the Third World, but it should not surprize Americans. Politics has been becoming show biz at least since John F. Kennedy, and most American politicians are now routinely surrounded by "media experts." Reagan may simply be the logical consequence of this confluence. One is tempted to say that either the Presidency has become just another show in the world of show biz, or that show biz has now taken over the major show in American politics. It is odd: Americans used to think of show biz folk as immoral, rootless wanderers, hedonistically living the high life depicted in *Photoplay* (a fanzine part of the mass fantasy) and thus as alluring threats to conventional values. And there was a grain of truth to it. Consider this strange contradiction highlighted at the Republican national convention: There was Reagan, now our first divorced President, speaking in praise of traditional values and the sanctity of the family, while his wife sat next to Elizabeth Taylor (not exactly Mother Elizabeth Seton) and his guest of honor was Frank Sinatra (not exactly St. Francis). The Reagans' show biz neighbors in Beverly Hills probably do not live the life favored by the Moral Majority.

Despite the obvious contradictions, Reagan became in the 1970s the symbol and spokesman not only for the political right but also for the "taste culture" of the World War II generation. Not only has the world

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President Reagan faces a grim fact of The Tube: television, like revolution, devours its own children, and whom it would create it would also destroy.

seemed to these citizens to have gone nuts politically, but also culturally. The styles and themes of much of our recent popular culture were not theirs. Reagan, however, was a familiar voice from the past, seemed to defy change by his longevity and adherence to things as they were, and promised them a restoration of time past. He said the right words in his "Aw shucks" matinee idol manner, wore brown shoes, pocket handkerchiefs, and a pomade pompadour, and seemed to be the last living link with a world that was once (in our fantasies) orderly and sane. There was no war hero like General Eisenhower around to return the World War II generation to that world, and Reagan was the only political celebrity who could mobilize their feelings.

Perhaps it is worth noting that Reagan's role on TV was that of host. He was the *compleat* host—amiable, familiar, comfortable in our living rooms—who spoke to us softly in that marvelous voice. That was the television extension of his movie *persona*—the nice guy with boyish charm who communicated both ease and confidence. (He is, for example, quite different from the prissy, serious, ambitious, but halting Jimmy Carter.) Reagan's image includes the small town quality of not being in a hurry, content with one's lot, moving leisurely through life without ever aspiring. It is a powerful dramatic gift, one developed by Reagan at Warner Brothers, to appear quiet, unassuming, but solid and virtuous. Reagan made the perfect host for *Death Valley Days*; he could introduce its simple stories, even act in them occasionally, and always conclude them by drawing the proper moral lessons.

If politics for many of us has become a property of the mass media, it would be logical to assume that show biz personalities with "presentational skills" and recognizable *personae* might move into political roles. The high premium put on the politician's television performance suggests that these with the fame and fortune that show biz success brings can transfer those resources to another kind of acting—political. Will Reagan's political success now give other media personalities ideas about performing on another stage? Far better actors might ask: If poor old Ronnie Reagan can do it, why can't I?

But as Mr. Dooley said, "You can't follow a banjo act with a banjo act." The very mass media that brought Reagan to the fore may well destroy him. The world of the movies, of television, of even the Republican national convention is a controlled environment in which performing skills can sustain a neatly drawn fictional world. But the world of the Presidency in the 1980s is not the small town of *King's Row*, or the American West of *Death Valley Days*, or even Sacramento in the 1960s. One may come to the Presidency on the strength of an adequate performance which appeals to a mass fantasy, but political reality has a way of upsetting controlled environments. It is one thing to dramatize one's intentions about political reality through the mass media; it is another thing to make that reality jump through the hoop.

Our desire for the Good Guy to win is satisfied in the world of show biz fantasy, but it is not necessarily satisfied in the real world of politics. Reagan's appealing truisms in "The Speech" and his very best TV performances may not be able to contain the flood of events that will fill the early 1980s. Maybe in our desperation we simply hope that by bringing Hollywood to Washington some of the magic will rub off: the cavalry will come in time, the news program dramas will end happily ever after, and someone repeating the Old Values often enough on TV will make the real world right again. Would that it were so.

Even the most talented actor, backed by the most skilled makeup artists, cannot control the ravages of time and television. To Reagan's admirers this would be cruel; to his detractors, it might seem a fitting irony that the man of the media is destroyed by the very means he used so adroitly to advance his political career.

Reagan faces not only the disparity between show biz conceived reality and actual reality. He also faces a grim fact of The Tube: television, like revolution, devours its own children. Or, to put it another way, he whom The Tube would create it would also destroy. Reagan faces not only grave political problems but also the considerable difficulty of getting some parts of the country to take him seriously. We will be treated to endless re-runs of old (and often embarrassingly bad) Reagan movies, including the one he hates the most, *That Hagen Girl*, in which he plays a liberal Democrat running for the Senate. Some of his more ludicrous TV appearances will reappear, possibly including the *Death Valley Days* episode in which lawyer Reagan defends, in moving summation, a dog. One movie critic has already predicted that *Bedtime for Bonzo* may become the *Rocky Horror Picture Show* of the 1980s, with the kids in the audience cheering for the chimpanzee.

But more difficult for Reagan will be the unrelenting microscopic

We hope we are not now watching The Late Show.

probe of TV news programs. The gaffes, disinformation, and cliches that enough voters apparently forgave during the 1980 campaign may become more irritating during his tenure in office. If the host cannot control the show, will we want to switch channels? And, to be blunt, there is the problem of aging: Reagan has started what some people believe is the most difficult job in the world at age seventy. As time passes, will TV cruelly pick up physical or even mental deterioration? Will political *faux pas* be interpreted as advancing senility? Given the media's penchant for promoting political dramas, will they then begin to talk earnestly about the Twenty-Fifth Amendment (that's the presidential disability amendment) and its provisions?

Even the most talented actor, backed by the most skilled makeup artists, cannot control the ravages of time and television. To Reagan's admirers, this would be cruel; to his detractors, it might seem a fitting irony that the man of the media ultimately is destroyed by the very means he used so adroitly to advance his political career. In any case, Reagan's electoral success is surely an innovation in the political recruitment process in America, and it should give pause to those who chronically underestimate the impact of the mass media on our political life.

It also might make us wonder how far the powers of show biz can carry us in the real world. This may be less of a problem for Reagan who, after all, was the real Governor of California, than it may be for some of his mass media followers. He has aroused their political expectations with TV histrionics, and it will be more than merely interesting to see how far he can sustain the act and make the show go on for them. And, since all our skins are riding on it, we can fervently hope that we are not watching The Late Show.

Image at Needle's Eye

(For Dorothy and Donald Pennington)

I

I envy nothing that's old.
Ripples on my river run
the same spirals blackbirds fly:
rushlight or candle,
the smoking years burn no closer
to what the bishop seeks to
sign the water with.

II

Suppose He was an animal—
a lion, an eagle:
from beak-point to a bright yellow
three-headed question.
His high stone cross
is filled with moons and
rows of beasts that bite and hold.

III

At the island's heart
through the Needle's Eye
the flood brings me
the image of a man
and the scream of hungry cranes from the rock-crags:
I wait for my body to give up
and love Him the way a tree withers.
As the seasons fall
I do not expect the ebb or flow
will come to me.

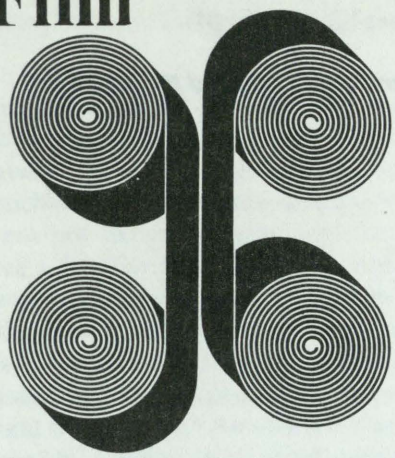
Robert Wishoff

Tree Trimming

The tulip tree was dying at the top,
a spike projecting from its glimmering
green goblet of flat leaves.
It should be cut, we said,
but who can climb to do it?
High days and nights of storm it stood
encrossed into a summer sky
in argument with its own dying,
until one bright of morning showed
the tree had sloughed its petrified
as though a careful axe had claimed
dividing line of death and life
in gust of that fierce angel's breath
swording our now indentured field
as terrible that flaming trimmed
again, the again unnecessary Adam.

Jean Hollander

Film



Kurosawa elicits many kinds of intelligence from his audience in this meditative epic.

The Beggar King

On Agitation and Stasis in Kurosawa's *Kagemusha*

Richard Maxwell

Akira Kurosawa's *Kagemusha* was the best film of 1980.[1] My thanks to Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, and the Japanese Government for financing it. My thanks to the Biograph Theater in Chicago for showing it. When this column is published well into 1981, there still may be a chance to see it at local movie houses, but don't count on it. Getting a mass audience to a highly-subsidized Japanese historical epic isn't an easy task. *Kagemusha* has qualities that an admirer of, say, Lucas' *Star Wars* should understand. Alas, teenagers who are willing to spend time figuring out the intricacies of *The Empire Strikes Back* are not going to give *Kagemusha* a chance. Their parents, moreover, don't go to movies. Very few Americans will get a chance to see *Kagemusha.* Here's what they're missing.

They're missing, first of all, Kurosawa's flair for action: for bodies moving in space. A messenger dashes down a flight of steps that must go on for a mile, stirring in his wake the multitudes of a resting army. Fussy retainers sweep an entryway with a sort of housewively desperation, then dash back just before warriors ride armored horses through a monumental gateway. There's a lot in these images to give the conjectured feel of a vanished, ancient civilization. The people in this film live intensely, as though however cruel the past may have been it was in some way truer than the present. This conviction comes through forcefully—not as nostalgia, more as simple recognition. Kurosawa can stylize one shot after another—the use of color is extraordinary—but our belief in this world of the past never falters. Not for a moment.

Because of its grasp on a created cinematic reality, *Kagemusha* can afford a silence or a mystery at its center. Surrounded by memorably visualized action is the story of the shadow king, the mountain which does not move. Our hero is a beggar-thief, saved from crucifixion because he is the perfect double for the leader of a warrior clan. The king is fatally wounded at a siege; the beggar must replace him, must mimic him perfectly, or the bereaved clan will be crushed by several rival factions. The shadow king is at first a great success. He fools his own army and enjoys doing so until suddenly the game seems confining. We see him try to steal a treasure and run, but the giant pot he cracks open in hopes of wealth proves the coffin of his royal double. This is a turning-point in the film. The beggar himself had not realized the king was dead. He is terrified by his discovery—perhaps because he has committed a sacrilege; perhaps because he has confronted his own death; perhaps (finally) because he is now trapped in another man's life. His desire to escape from this role intensifies.

Just the same, he cannot escape. Caught by the guard, he refuses to play king any longer, then—the next day—insists on it. His conviction of personal responsibility comes when he watches the pot submerged in a broad, desolate lake. A few noble mourners bow at the shoreline while the erstwhile shadow king watches from a shore-wrecked boat. He is back in his beggar's rags already, but somehow he cannot leave. Three spies from rival armies peer out another window of the same abandoned vessel, speculating on what this strange ritual might mean. Has the king died, and is it therefore time to attack? At this moment—overhearing their conversation—the beggar resolves to be a king once more.

Kagemusha quietens somewhat in this scene, and the quietness continues. It even begins to prevail. Having begun as an epic, the film seeks out another mode whose spirit we must accommodate. Kurosawa now concentrates on the comic or fearful strangeness of a prolonged impersonation. The shadow king is trained by his advisors much as Eliza Dolittle was trained by Henry Higgins. A whole new set of manners must be learned, a whole new attitude towards the world. He must get through a meeting with his supposed grandson and then with his supposed mistresses. His "grandson" knows him for an imposter at a glance. The shadow king rises to the challenge. He gives the first really difficult performance of his career, responding to the boy's challenge with an affecting combination of affection and deference. Later his

[1] Among American films, I still haven't seen *The Stunt Man* or *Melvin and Howard.* Nor have I seen the new works by Godard and Bergman. Of those movies I have seen, I liked *My Brilliant Career, Being There, Dressed to Kill,* and *The Empire Strikes Back.* Not too much else.

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We are to appreciate an intricate and colorful spectacle, catch the social nuances of an alien society, and, above all, be sensitive to an elusive spirit of mystery.

advisors tell him that he did right. "You act from the heart," they say; "so did our late lord." The meeting with the mistresses contrasts elegantly. Here the shadow king almost breaks down. He confesses his imposture but the women won't believe him. The scene is played—how can I say it?—as a sentimental farce, with the shadow king's beggarly panic set off against his genuinely changing identity. He no longer has a choice in the matter of who he is.

The film moves from chronicle to meditation and then back again. After watching it for an hour or so, the film seems to be happening inside of your mind.

The reader will have understood by this time that Kurosawa elicits many kinds of intelligence from his audience. We are to appreciate an intricate and colorful spectacle; we are to catch the social nuances of an alien society (alien, I suppose, to contemporary Japanese audiences; much more so to us); above all, we are to be sensitive to a tone, an elusive spirit of mystery. The film is meditative: philosophical, almost, in the manner of Shakespeare's romances.[2] After you've been watching it for an hour or so, this unwieldy spectacle seems to be happening inside your mind. Prospero's speech about actors melting to air would go well in *Kagemusha*. The great movements of history are treated as performances, controlled illusions sustained by a magical influence. Kurosawa doesn't need to show us ghosts stalking across the screen. We understand, if we look and listen, that the shadow warrior is at times inspired—virtually to the point of possession. It is difficult to distinguish between possession and theatrical competence. The disguised beggar strokes his mustache in the style of the lord he impersonates. A group of retainers—all of them in on the secret of the impersonation—burst out weeping. The illusion is most affecting for those who can acknowledge it as such. What, then, are the boundaries between natural and supernatural, the fitful inspiration of a somewhat cowardly impersonator and the truth that he weirdly seizes? Kurosawa never pauses for explanations, for they would only dispel the remarkable mood of the film.

My account of *Kagemusha* has emphasized a movement from action to stillness, from chronicle to meditation, but this movement is really both ways. The point has been made before, about other Kurosawa films. In his fine account of *Cobweb Castle* (*Throne of Blood*), Noel Burch identifies a fluctuation between "dramatically 'full' stasis and . . . 'empty' agitation."[3] Something like this dialectic informs many of Kurosawa's movies. Burch assumes that such a movement is intrinsically valuable—valuable, that is, because it sets Kurosawa's work apart from corrupt western values—but this is a bit much. *Kagemusha* is getting at something much more specific, much less abstract. When the film returns to action, it is to test the shadow king. The dialectic of "stasis" and "agitation" becomes a challenge to the validity of this prolonged impersonation.

In conversation with retainers, the shadow king learns much of the clan's lore. He learns, especially, that the lord should sit like a mountain. This immovable spirit is essential to his rule. All very well to accept such imperatives—but can he actually obey them? At the climax of the film, he gets his chance. As he surveys a complicated nighttime battle, where his mere presence is supposed to frighten the enemy, hostile calvary move precipitously towards and around him. He flinches, but he remains a still center. He is a presence which cannot be violated. His unmistakable silhouette finally forces a retreat.

Since the late lord received his fatal wound as he sat at the siege of

[2] Kurosawa's next project is evidently to be something from Shakespeare. *Cobweb Castle* (1957) is an inspired retelling of *Macbeth*.

[3] *To The Distant Observer* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 313.

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a city—since the enemy was able to kill him *because* he sat so immovably—the shadow king has clearly taken a chance. Stillness is a risk, not a cure-all, and not (as Burch sometimes appears to believe) an intrinsic value to which the oriental mind invariably reverts. Stillness is only the right risk. It is the right way to live or die, at least for this particular clan. The triumph of the shadow king is that he fleetingly understands the nature of his own imposture, the strength on which its flimsiness can draw.

The imposture comes to an end, eventually, when the shadow king refuses to sit still. He tries to mount the late lord's horse, a savage beast, and is humiliatingly thrown. One of his mistresses opens his shirt to help revive him and discovers that he lacks an identifying scar (he has not been sleeping with either mistress). When we next see him, he is being driven away from the fortress city he once ruled.

After this painful scene, *Kagemusha* builds quickly to its conclusion, a disastrous cavalry charge in which the entire clan is wiped out. The late lord's son, who has taken over, does not understand the value of mountains. The charge itself is soon dealt with. Kurosawa lengthens out its aftermath, which becomes a ghastly slow-motion dance of men and horses trying to rise from the field and then subsiding into death. We might say: the battlefield of expiring warriors is neither motion nor stasis. It exists in a trance-like moment where any action brings death, and stillness is death itself. The shadow king—a homeless beggar once more—watches from a nearby field, much as he had watched the funeral on the lake. When he dashes out this time, he dies with a tradition that briefly survived because of him.[4]

[4] Valparaiso University readers of this column might note that while *Kagemusha* will not be seen on campus for a few years, Kon Ichikawa's *An Actor's Revenge* will play on campus February 19. This is one of the great Japanese films and makes a striking companion piece to the Kurosawa work.

On the Road to Charlottesville

When they came back, with regimental cloth
hanging like rags from wasted bodies,
it was up this road they trudged.

Young master dragged a lantern he had
unhooked from a deserted stable wall.
Sancho bent under winters and a bag

of rot—all the two of them
had clawed from the bereavement
of each day.

Cutting from the road, up this walk
they came, past the sultry pasture,
the pond lined with weeds, the hollow

where a fox had been torn.
There was a bark, and the last
of the golden labradors leaped

from under a broken porch.
A candle hesitated, then took flame.
A door rattled cautiously.

Then they were in a circle of women,
faces in slow grieving motion,
planets around the candle flame.

Later, a grandson of the soldier
set up the stone: To commemorate/
seventy five slaves/ and especially

Sancho Panza/ who served
his master/ 1861-1865.

Sister Maura

If the Kingdom Comes

Will it have the purity denied us here?
White roses in the snow, so cold, so clear,
Growing wild on the thin ridge of a drift—
A world where ivory is all of color?

Will the glint of ice give pain to human eyes?
Will pain be shining on the points of knives?
If the light becomes Christ's sword,
Will we flinch? Will we wince away from the light's incisions?
What if paradise (that old consoling lie)
Arrives as a harder truth than we can bear?

Lucy Ryegate

Books

From Assimilation Toward Assertion

Review Essay

James W. Albers

The Lutheran Church In North American Life 1776-1976, 1580-1980

Edited by John E. Groh and Robert H. Smith. St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, Inc., and The Lutheran Academy for Scholarship, 1979. Pp. 195. Paper. $5.95.

During the first half of the twentieth century, American church historiography underwent a significant change. Older church histories were often filiopietistic, revering and endorsing the deeds of the fathers. The scope of their historical narratives was usually limited to events within the particular denomination under discussion, with historical change generally attributable either to Providence or to theological conflicts within the denomination.

The change in historiography occurred for several reasons. First, the general discipline of history was undergoing a change. James Harvey Robinson led historians to view the past as intelligible only by seeing the interrelationship between all areas of human activity. History was thus broadened from its traditional basis in political history to include the history of science, technology, law, medicine, art, literature, and religion, to name some of the most prominent new areas of inquiry. As historians became interested in religious history, church historians were trained in the new approaches of the so-called "secular historian." The development of the social sciences in the twentieth century provided further impetus for interest in what H. Richard Niebuhr called "The Social Sources of Denominationalism."

Church historiography in the last several decades has had to take seriously the social conditioning, coloration, and context in which churches have gone about their business. This is not to say that the question of historical causation has been resolved. The church historian will probably not want to settle for explanations which are purely social or cultural in nature. The need to describe the way in which theology and piety motivated previous generations of Christians needs to be wrestled with and probably emphasized in a way which one cannot expect from a purely social or cultural historian.

Among the historians of American Lutheranism, it was the late Abdel Ross Wentz who pioneered the attempt to locate the history of American Lutherans in the larger American cultural setting in his *The Lutheran Church in American History* (1923). Wentz employed the relatively unsophisticated device of prefacing each chapter with a section describing the major political, economic, and social events in America during the period under consideration. This technique had the value of alerting the reader to the fact that Lutherans had not lived in a "once upon a time" but in the midst of a larger more complex world. Wentz left it to the imagination of the reader, however, to comprehend the possible interrelationships.

During the last several decades there has been an increasingly respectable amount of research on the influence of American culture on the history of Lutheranism in the United States. Much of this research consists of unpublished doctoral dissertations, but the synthetic narratives, most notably E. Clifford Nelson's (ed.) *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), have taken much of this research into account, but only in passing.

The Lutheran Church in North American Life: 1776-1976, 1580-1980 is the first attempt at specific examination of the synthesis since Paul W. Spaude wrote his *The Lutheran Church Under American Influence* (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1943). Whereas Spaude concentrated on the first half of the nineteenth century, and saw "American Influence" more in terms of Puritanism and Methodism, the present volume seeks to determine as precisely as possible, given the current research, the extent to which Lutherans have been influenced by their American environment and in turn contributed to its shaping. It contains six essays on points of contact between Lutherans and American public life. The six topics are politics, science, education, economics, social action, and what is called "American Lutheranism: Ethos, Style, and Polity."

This volume is the result of a project by the Lutheran Academy for Scholarship, with support from the Aid Association for Lutherans, to examine Lutheran history in the light of the American Bicentennial observance. It was hoped that the volume would be considered not only by historians but by a variety of thoughtful Lutherans, and the

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Older church histories were often filiopietistic, revering and endorsing the deeds of the fathers.

Lutheranism does not seem to develop a strong sense of responsibility for this world, and the question rises whether there is a bias against politics in Lutheran theology.

essayists were therefore urged to do more than write history. Although good history often stimulates one to think not only about the past but to reflect on the future as well, this volume is explicit in doing so. The authors were encouraged to move from historical narrative into an identification of the current state of affairs and, if they wished, to make some statements about the future. Some essays reflect greater enthusiasm for the prophetic role than others.

Norman A. Graebner's lead essay, "Lutherans and Politics," suggests that political activity is an important measure of cultural assimilation. Graebner asserts that, with the exception of the period of the American Revolution, Lutherans have been less active politically than members of most other denominations. At the time of the Revolution several Lutherans reached national prominence, among them John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, a major-general in the Revolutionary Army, and Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, member of the Continental Congress and speaker of the First and Third federal Congresses. Not entirely accurate, however, is the inclusion of the father of the previous two leaders, the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, among those who provided "some of the most determined leadership for the independence cause" (p. 12). The elder Muhlenberg had serious misgivings about the entire undertaking as well as the participation of his own sons.

Because of language differences, lack of political experience in the old world, and a generally rural social background, the nineteenth century immigrant Lutherans were not disposed to enter the field of American politics. Eastern American Lutherans were more Americanized and more likely to become politically involved, as in the case of the Franckean Synod, which was formed in 1837 specifically to support abolitionism. Graebner does not examine the political involvement of eastern Lutherans beyond the time of the Civil War, an omission which seems to be attributable to the lack of research on the topic. There is surprisingly little Lutheran involvement in politics even after the major acculturation of most Lutheran groups had occurred by mid-twentieth century, although the assimilation process for the Missouri Synod is identified as late.

The essay raises the haunting question of why Lutherans have been under-represented in politics. Allowing for factors relating to their immigrant status and mentality, the question is raised whether there is a bias against political activity built into Lutheran piety and theology, particularly in Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms. While this doctrine, it seems to this reviewer, should provide Lutherans with all the theological room they need to enter the political arena, Lutheranism does not seem to have developed a strong sense of Christian responsibility for the life of this world, especially when compared with the impact of Calvinism.

Leigh D. Jordahl, in "American Lutheranism: Ethos, Style, and Polity," begins by pointing out that for Lutherans ceremonies of the church which are "instituted by men" need not be uniform for the true unity of the church. Lutherans, nevertheless, have had great respect for ceremonial traditions and folk piety. Much the same is true of church polity. Viewing "forms not as right or wrong but as helpful or unhelpful, "Lutherans forsook the state-church structures of the old world and engaged in "pragmatic innovation" in the new world. The variety of their responses to matters of worship and polity has influenced the perpetuation of Lutheran disunity and colored their relationships with American culture.

Jordahl, like Graebner, finds it useful to distinguish between eastern and midwestern Lutherans in describing differences in church style and liturgical practice. In this connection Jordahl forges a neat comparison of typical General Synod congregations and midwestern Lutheran congregations at the turn of the twentieth century. He concludes his essay prescriptively, observing that while:

> Few would favor a further expansion of organic Lutheran units along the lines which led to the mergers of the 1960s. . . Lutherans cannot return to that interesting, vital, but fragmented diversity of the nineteenth century foundation days. Lutherans must find some new kinds of arrangements (new "ceremonies," "polities," "styles," and "visions") in order to do their task in the years ahead. Freedom, pragmatism, and innovation have since the very beginning characterized Lutheran adjustment to American culture. (pp. 53f)

Bruce Wrightsman of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, expanded his assignment to include the history of Lutherans and science from the Reformation to the present. Wrightsman vigorously contests the views of Andrew Dickenson White (*History of the Warfare of Science with Theology,* 1896) as falsely interpreting the longer history of science in relation to theology as one of warfare. Wrightsman joins other recent historians of science in announcing that the war that never was is now over, even though the word of truce has not penetrated every corner of the Church—and the scientific community, for that matter. More precisely, the warfare model, developed in the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy at the turn of the century, had, says Wrightsman, unfortunately, become the misleading paradigm for the longer, more amiable relationship between religion and science.

Utilizing the work of Thomas Kuhn (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions,* 1962), Wrightsman argues that the western world has undergone revolutions in the develop-

Lutherans generally maintain a "co-existence" attitude toward science and religion, assuming both are discrete aspects of knowledge presently incapable of synthesis.

ment of theories or paradigms of knowledge by which facts and data are judged. Revolutionary movements cause temporary confusion both for science and religion—for religion since it uses symbols of the physical world to communicate the truths of the faith.

Wrightsman refutes White's assertion that Luther opposed the Copernican theory and that Professors Rheticus and Reinhold of Wittenberg, who supported the Copernican view, left the University because their views were suppressed. They taught the new theory and left their teaching positions in order to see these views into publication, and they were assisted in this undertaking by other Lutheran leaders.

Sixteenth century astronomers Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler were also Lutherans. Wrightsman also asks how it could be, if Lutheran theology was truly at war with science, that:

> Giordano Bruno, the most ardent of the Copernicans before Kepler and a Dominican monk as well, was allowed to teach his theories openly for two years at the University of Wittenberg (1586-88), at the very time the orthodox reaction was on the rise? Bruno was eventually burned at the stake, but that happened in Rome, not in Wittenberg. (p. 67)

North American science trailed that of France and England up to the time of World War II. Because of language barriers between immigrant Lutherans and the leading French and English scientific communities, Confessional suspicions of rationalism reinforced by the American climate of anti-intellectualism, the preoccupation with gathering immigrants into churches, and the rural ethos of much of immigrant Lutheranism, there have been few outstanding American Lutheran scientists. Exceptions include post-Revolutionary figures such as Nicholas Collin, a botanist who corresponded with a Swedish Lutheran Carl Linnaeus, and Henry E. Muhlenberg, also a botanist and president of Franklin College. Only one Lutheran scientific researcher, Norman Borlaug, has won a Nobel prize.

American Lutherans have generally maintained an attitude of "co-existence" between science and religion, assuming that both are valid but discrete aspects of human knowledge and not capable of being satisfactorily synthesized, at least for the present.

Wrightsman concludes by noting that the current scientific community is generally open to the consideration of religious knowledge as a component in the model of truth; thus, an opportunity exists for the construction of a new paradigm of reality which will satisfy both religious and scientific knowledge. An impediment to this achievement seems to be the current absence of serious discussion of these issues, even in the most prestigious graduate schools. There is also an increasingly recognized need for cooperation on the part of the religious and scientific communities in approaching the ecological and social issues of our age.

In science, as in politics, the haunting question arises, why are there not more prominent Lutheran scientists? Is the answer social or theological, or some combination of the two?

J. Russell Hale's essay on "Lutherans and Social Action," more than any of the other essays, is an engagement of the Lutheran Church with the contemporary world situation. The essay focusses historically and contemporaneously on the issues of war, poverty, and ethnic (which the author prefers to "racial") conflict in the world. This essay, more than any other, bears the impress of moods and attitudes which prevailed in the late sixties and early seventies when these essays were first drafted. The issues are perennial, however, and the essay useful.

Despite the topical overlap with Lutherans in politics and Lutherans in social action, Neil M. Johnson carves out an interesting block of material on the history of Lutheran attitudes toward economic issues in his essay, "Lutherans in American Economic Life." Although the Lutheran introduction of the log cabin to North America in the 1600s may come as a surprise to many readers, the predominant rural, agricultural, and middle class characteristics of Lutherans in nineteenth and twentieth century America will not. The summary of Lutheran economic attitudes in the late nineteenth century, including the Social Gospel and Labor unions, is good. The material on the Depression of the 1930s and the economic issues of the 1960s,

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such as poverty, farm life, and concern for migratory workers, provide helpful background to current issues.

Lutherans have produced no major economic leaders, although there have been several prominent economic thinkers among disaffected American Lutherans—Thorsten Veblen, Jacob Riis, and Walter P. Reuther.

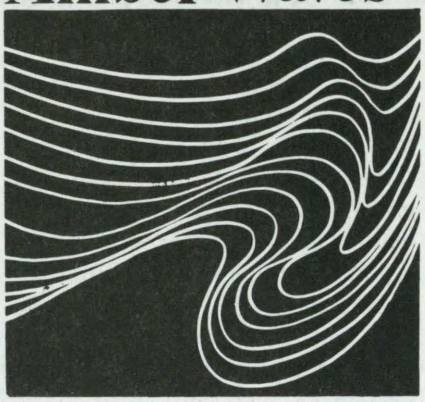
Stephen A. Schmidt concludes the symposium with "American Education: A Lutheran Footnote." After briefly tracing the history of American elementary and higher education, Schmidt concludes that Lutherans, together with Roman Catholics, have contributed to a viable pluralism of educational experience in America. Some might disagree with the assertion that such a contribution be classified as a footnote in the history of American education. It may be worth a few sentences, perhaps even a paragraph or two—but, true enough, not a chapter.

In conclusion, the book is provocative and appears to lend itself well to educated adult discussion. The lack of an index, several typographical errors, and the failure to show how "1580-1980" in the subtitle is substantively related to the content of the volume are only minor shortcomings.

The bicentennial has come and gone, but the history of Lutherans in America will continue for the foreseeable future. If Lutheran participation in public life and intellectual circles has been limited by the immigrant condition, perhaps American Lutherans will begin to make larger contributions in the nation's third century. If it has been limited by its theology or piety, then a good bit of thinking and discussion at various levels will be required for significant change to occur.

The Lutheran Academy for Scholarship has rendered a fine service both in asking scholars to address these issues and in publishing the results. It is the reviewer's hope that this effort by the Academy will stimulate further research and discussion of the very important issues addressed in this volume.

Amber Waves



The Hieroglyphs Speak!

"Our Father" Found In The Land of the Pharaohs

R. T. Abernathy

(Editor's Note: *The editor acknowledges with gratitude the following contribution to* Amber Waves *by fellow editor Robert Stroud. The text fell into Mr. Stroud's hands while he was editing Dr. Abernathy's fortieth volume in the "Egyptology for the Layman" series and is prepublished here with the kind permission of the author and Mr. Stroud's editorial assurance of the complete accuracy of the footnotes.*)

Feast of Saint Simeon the Stylite
Cairo, Egypt

From deep in the ancient land of the pharaohs comes new archaeological evidence which reveals to me that the Lord's Prayer was known in pharaonic Egypt thousands of years before the Christian era.

Despite the lukewarm acceptance of this new evidence by the scholarly community, the comments of a noted TV preacher and evangelistic trendsetter reflect the tenor of the popular response I predict for my discovery. Preferring anonymity until he checks the ratings garnered by his "Shroud of Turin Show," he has nevertheless assured me personally that "this discovery promises to prove beyond any shadow of a doubt the historical accuracy of every jot and tittle of the Bible."

As the discoverer of this evidence and the formulator of the Pharaonic Lord's Prayer theory, my own expectations are a bit more modest; I merely consider it a discovery which will turn upside down all previously held notions of archaeology. This new evidence allows archaeologists to break out of the stereotype voiced by an eminent Argentinian egyptologist who said that "archaeologists are merely underpaid publicity agents for deceased royalty."[1]

And what exactly is this discovery which pales the importance of the library tablets from Ebla by comparison? Before we turn to the evidence itself, let me remind you of the many dangers contingent upon working in the Land of the Nile. It was in 1974 that the tragic story of the curse of King Zut came to light.[2] As reported, the distinguished egyptologist Prof. T. B. Glidden of Cambridge, along with 196 souls had in 1909 entered the Valley of the Scribes. There they discovered the tomb of the obscure First Dynasty ruler Zut-Ankh-Naktunan, "the legendary club-footed pharaoh." The curse which has since claimed the lives of most egyptologists present that day resulted from their breaking the seal of his tomb's door. The inscription above the entrance ominously read "whoever defiles the tomb of King Zut is in for a rough time of it."

Aware of the multitudinous dangers of working in that ancient land, I nevertheless was willing to sacrifice my own peace and comfort in the pursuit of the aristocratic way.

Robert Stroud, *a 1977 graduate of the University of Washington, is presently completing the M.Div. degree program at Luther-Northwestern Seminaries in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is serving as Assistant to the Editor of* Lutheran Renewal International.

[1] *The Mole People*, (Universal Studios, 1956).

[2] "The Curse of King Zut," National Lampoon Radio Hour, February 3, 1974.

Creative discovery helps archaeologists break out of the stereotype of being merely underpaid publicity agents for deceased royalty.

While dining in one of Cairo's more fashionable restaurants, I was approached by a young native boy who offered to sell me two small stone fragments he had found while digging in various ruins. I gave him a pittance for the stones, placed them in my pocket to examine later at my leisure, and ordered another glass of sherry. Little did I realize that those small stones would make me famous.

Not that the stones themselves were particularly significant, but once restored by my reconstruction they proved that the Lord's Prayer was commonly known (at least among the literate classes of Egypt) at least 2500 B.C.E. Employing the techniques of reconstruction perfected by Dr. Robert McAfee Brown,[3] I conclusively established that we had here fragments of the most ancient copy of the Lord's Prayer known. See figure 1 for an illustration of the reconstruction procedure.

When I presented my discovery to my archaeological colleagues, most strangely shunned me, but many laymen in egyptology heard me gladly. In the latter group was a church growth advance man, and he avowed "this discovery undeniably proves the entire validity of the Bible so that we no longer have need of faith. Why would anyone take our religious claims on mere faith when he can have *knowledge*?"

There is no need to belabor the argument in support of my thesis. While the reader has indisputable evidence before his own eyes, there is also a corroborating document which utterly confirms every detail of my hypothesis. This is, one might say, my trump card. In support of my theory we have the witness of the great Samuel Langhorne Clemens, who often wrote under the pseudonymn Mark Twain.

[3]Robert McAfee Brown, *The Collect'd Writings of St. Hereticus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 4-7.

Clemens was, by his own admission, a scholar of no mean reputation, and in one of his essays he relates how "four or five thousand years ago a Simplified Spelling epidemic had broken out." Although the focus of his essay is upon the attempt by some ancients to replace hieroglyphics with the Phoenician alphabet, his essay also supports my contention that the Lord's Prayer was known in pharaonic Egypt. I quote his witness in part:

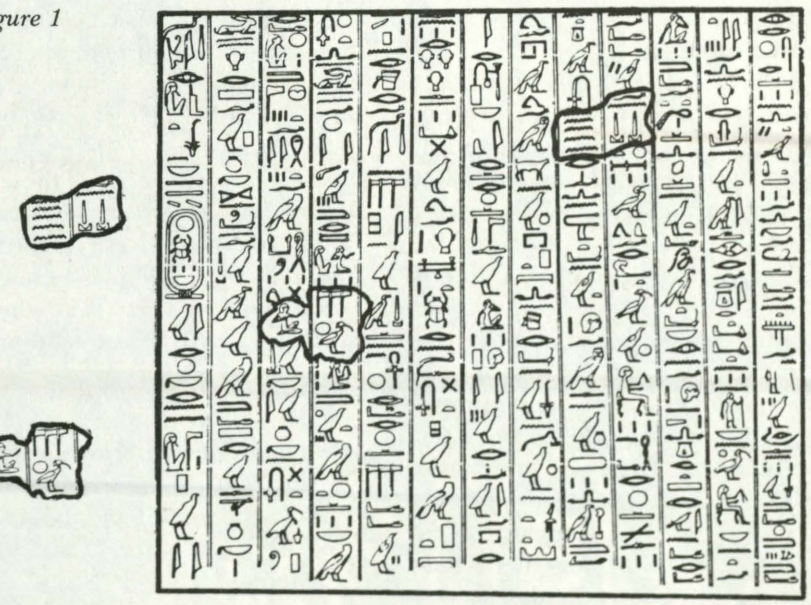
> Uncle Cadmus [one of the simplifiers] began with an object lesson, with chalk, on a couple of blackboards. On one of them he drew in outline a slender Egyptian in a short skirt . . . carrying a couple of dinner pails, one in each hand. In front of this figure he drew a toothed line like an excerpt from a saw, in front of this he drew three skeleton birds of doubtful ornithological origin . . . [until] his great blackboard was full from top to bottom. Everybody recognized the invocation set forth by the symbols: *it was the Lord's Prayer.* [italics my own] It had taken him forty-five minutes to set it down. Then he stepped to the other blackboard and dashed off "Our Father which art in heaven," in graceful Italian script, spelling the words as best he knew how in those days, and finished it up in four minutes and a half.[4]

The sympathetic reader will note that the evidence in support of my Pharaonic Lord's Prayer theory is enormous. Indeed, it is safe to say it is no longer a theory, but is rather a fact to affirm without fear of contradiction. The ramifications of this fact are boundless, not least of which is the apparent certainty archaeological evidence affords to religious faith.

As for me, I intend to sacrifice myself tirelessly while searching for further fragments of evidence to support my broader thesis that Egypt was God's initial selection for His "Chosen People," and that for some unknown reason He later changed His mind and chose the Hebrews. Meanwhile, I can be found in the lounge of the Regency Hotel in Cairo.

[4]Mark Twain, "Simplified Spelling," *Letters From the Earth*, ed. Bernard Devoto (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 130-4.

Figure 1



Reconstruction of the Lord's Prayer in hieroglyphs by Dr. R. T. Abernathy. The drawings to the left show the discovered fragments of the text. To the right is a drawing of the reconstruction of the text showing where the extant fragments undoubtedly were located.